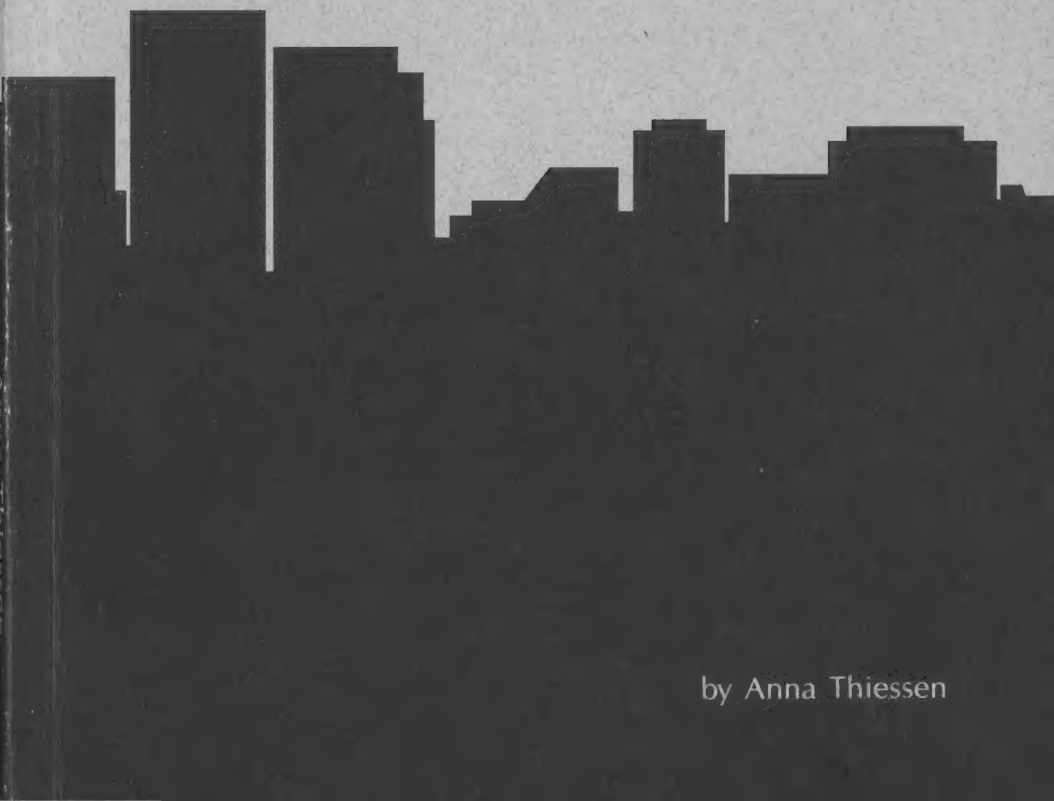
The City Mission in Winnipeg



by Anna Thiessen

438
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1991

Anna Thiessen

The City Mission in Winnipeg

Originally printed by Regehr's Printing
326 McKay Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

The City Mission in Winnipeg

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Book design by Publishing Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Thiessen, Anna

The City Mission in Winnipeg

Translation of: Die Stadtmission in Winnipeg.

ISBN 1-895432-19-7

1. Mary-Martha Home (Winnipeg, Man.) 2. Children - Institutional care - Manitoba - Winnipeg - History. 3. Mennonites - Manitoba - Winnipeg - History.

I. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. II. Title

HV887.C32W5713 1992 362.7'0971272 C92-098026-0

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Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Printed in Canada
by
The Christian Press
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Anna Thiessen
The City Mission in Winnipeg

Dedicated with love and gratitude
to the many friends
of the City Mission

Translated from the German
by
Ida Toews

Published by the
Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
1991
Manitoba, Canada

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION

It was in the mid 1960s that the Mennonite Brethren Church of Canada maneuvered its way through the final stages of the transition from the German to the English language. As early as World War II the transition had already begun, as was evident in the resignation of Dr. Abraham H. Unruh from the Bible College presidency (1946) because of his concern that the College should have a president with greater fluency in English.

By now that transition is history. The younger generation attending our high schools, Bible schools, Bible colleges and universities has only scant acquaintance with the German language. The effect of this transition on the study of Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren history is that now many of the rich resources of the past are inaccessible. Students find it difficult to do serious research work on Mennonite themes unless they have an adequate understanding of the German language.

Over the past few years, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies has received numerous inquiries by students for documentation on the early development and growth of the city church in Winnipeg as well as of the short-lived but very important organization of "Girls' Homes" in Winnipeg.

Information about both of these organizations is available in the German language. It is for this reason that the Centre decided to take some steps toward remedying the situation by translating a book that discusses both organizations and which in many ways constitutes one of the most important resources available.

In the spring of 1984, Ida Toews of Winnipeg volunteered her services and expertise (having been a German instructor for many years in the public school system) to the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. She willingly took up the task of preparing a translation of Anna Thiessen's book, *The City Mission in Winnipeg*. Within a matter of months, working only one day a week, the translation was completed.

It should be noted that Anna Thiessen frequently included poetry

in her manuscript to describe her emotional and contemplative response to the task at hand. Rather than leave this essential part of the text untranslated, Miss Toews has successfully attempted to recapture much of the essence of the poetry in translation.

A special word of thanks to Ida for her diligent and careful work and to Sherry Plett for the crisp, clean copy she typed. The book is certain to be an important resource in the years to come.

Ken Reddig and Abe Dueck

Note: The original book had a significant number of pictures. Where good copies could be found these have been reproduced or, in some cases, substitutions have been made. Others have been omitted.

Foreword

This little book contains many reports and descriptions of experiences from the history of the City Mission of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. The author, who was commissioned to do her life's work in this Mission by the Lord of the harvest, attempts to portray, in a faithful and lively manner and with humble gratitude to God and the Mennonite Brethren Conference, the saving grace and power of God. She points out God's wonderful leading, his gracious sustenance, and the power of Jesus Christ to save the lost and fallen sinner from the fearsome pit and place him on a secure rock. With a sense of appreciation and recognition, the book gives an account of the many laborers sent by the Lord to work in this Mission.

Anna Thiessen's faithfulness, her dedication, her love for God and man and her untiring search for the pursuit of the lost pervades the book like a breath from that eternity where great joy reigns over the penitence of one sinner. Since God is still looking for saved people who are prepared to extend a helping hand to the fallen, to show the way to the lost, and to heal the brokenhearted, may he bless this book to cause many hearts to exclaim willingly and with joy, "Lord, here I am, send me."

William Falk

Explanation

Some years ago, Brother H.P. Toews, for many years chairman of our City Mission, asked me to write down some of the aspects of the work and how the City Mission came about. I did not consider the possibility of having a book printed, but since friends repeatedly encouraged me, I have attempted to supply a small overview of the work in the form of a report.

The material has been gathered from Conference booklets, reports and my own experiences.

The oldest missionary work of the Canadian Conference is the City Mission of Winnipeg. This missionary work was supervised by a City Mission Committee, elected by the Conference. In the beginning, the Committee consisted of three brethren; later, as the work developed, several more brethren were added. Today the Committee consists of nine brethren.

These brethren have the task of appointing workers, and with these workers to investigate where and how the work is to be carried out, and to report to the Conference.

It has not always been easy for the Committee to organize and regulate the work and the workers under the various circumstances. But, likewise, it has not been easy for the workers to work under changing committees. Praise God that in all problems he was the victor and the work progressed with his blessing in spite of difficulties.

It is also surely not by chance that in the course of time (over four decades), seven brethren have served as chairmen, seven as secretaries and three as treasurers. Seven is the perfect number, three the sacred one. In spite of all shortcomings and weaknesses of the workers, the Lord will present the work to the Father in the fullness of time, perfect, holy and pure. Herewith the work is not completed but continues.

My wish and prayer is that this simple communication of facts, dates and experiences may be a blessing!

My heartfelt thanks to Brother H.P. Toews for having proofread this book!

Anna Thiessen
Winnipeg
September 1955

Anna Thiessen, author of this book.

1.

MISSION AMONG THE GERMANS

Brothers, Rally to the Work
(Prose paraphrase)
Brothers, rally to the work in the service of the Lord
Let us follow his way willingly!
In God's strength which renews us,
Let us joyfully follow Love's bidding.

The Lord has placed us on a holy watch;
Joyfully witness the salvation he has brought the world.
Make known everywhere the sinner's salvation;
Proclaim loudly to all: Salvation is come.

Search for the lost, as the Master has done;
To the forsaken bring comfort, help the poor;
Bring light into the night of sorrow.
Show, by loving the foe, what a Christian is.

With fresh vigor, enter the work to the glory of God
In the battle against the world and the army of darkness;
Brethren, there is work for us, let us do it;
The faithful will find eternal rest with God.

Introduction: The City of Winnipeg

Canada is a big, wide and open country that receives immigrants willingly. Therefore many of our Mennonites emigrated from Russia to Canada and, indeed, to the beautiful province of Manitoba. They set up their tents in the 1870s in the vicinities of Steinbach, Niverville and Hochfeld near Winkler. They endured many hardships, but courage and faith in God carried them through all difficulties. Manitoba was a beautiful field of service for our brethren who had settled in the United States somewhat earlier. Ministering brethren came from Bingham Lake, Min-

nesota, to the Winkler area, and a large number were converted to God. The Holy Spirit worked mightily, and the people were as one heart and soul. Thus the first Mennonite Brethren congregation was organized near Winkler in the year 1888.

Winnipeg is the capital city of Manitoba. In the years from 1870 to 1873 it was a small village of nineteen dwellings and approximately five hundred people. Today the population is close to 380,000. "Winnipeg" is an Indian name that means "muddy waters." Much truth lies in the symbolism of this name, for there is much sin here. But, praise God, there are always people who want to be cleansed from sin. This field the Lord gave to us. We have freedom to serve the length and breadth of the city. Nobody hinders the way or closes the border. The field is ripe for harvest, and when we see the need, we respond to the words the Lord spoke to his disciples with deep emotion: "The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37,38).

The halt, the lame, the blind he calls with gentle voice:
Come unto me, a place is yours by choice,
And their infirmities he covers with his grace;
All mercy gives if they but seek his face!

Beginnings

"Then, said he, what is the kingdom of God like? and to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and became a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." (Luke 13: 18,19) That is God's work and wisdom, that He can make something out of nothing and little things can become great.

Several families who were members of the Mennonite Brethren Church, as well as families who were German Baptists, newcomers from the Volga area in Russia, lived in Winnipeg. Some of these families joined the German Baptist Church. Others gathered in private homes as early as 1907, under the leadership of Brother Adam Pauls, to hold their prayer and worship meetings. These Brethren were looking for a

shepherd and spiritual advisor. They extended a call to the Winkler Mennonite Brethren congregation: "Come over to Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9).

Come Over and Help Us
(Prose paraphrase)

Look on the fields, wide and white
For harvest, for Jesus the Savior.
Man is placed in want and misery,
The tired bear the yoke of the world
And over them threatening clouds!
They are lost and disappear
Because for them the fires are not burning!
They stretch out pleading hands
And beg with breaking hearts:
"Save us who have gone astray
Throw us the lifeline in the storm
We are misled, we are sinking in pain
You, the pious, the pious, we are calling you:
Wake up, o awaken from your indolent rest."
Now then, here we are, we will go forth
To bring help to the brethren!
Let us work today! The hours flee,
O think of the Lord's bleeding toil.

(W. Joern)

Several brothers from Winkler were willing to come and serve the brethren, including Brother Johann Warkentin and Brother P.H. Neufeld. Brother Warkentin shepherded the small flock in a particularly fatherly way. His first question usually was, "Brother (or Sister), are you still on the heavenly journey?" He bought an empty lot at the corner of Burrows and Andrews, bought a small chapel, which was moved from St. Vital onto this lot, and so the Sunday services began. The neat little church was an ornament to the Burrows and Andrews vicinity, and attracted many a visitor. But the ministry included much sacrifice, for there were no highways, and one had to travel by rail, which took a great deal

of time. Therefore it was difficult for the brethren in Winkler to serve the brethren here. It became apparent that here was an opportunity and a necessity to serve the German population in the North End of our city.

It now became necessary to find a couple who would be willing to come and serve in the work. The Lord answered the prayers of the believers. Brother and Sister W.J. Bestvater of Mountain Lake, Minnesota, were willing to develop and extend this field. They were appointed by the fourth Northern District Conference in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan, as the first city missionaries. They arrived in October 1913, and began the work on 1 November with a group of twenty-two members. Some had been baptized by the brethren from Winkler. There was only one Mennonite family in this group.

Now the small congregation had a little church, its own pastor family, and a Sunday school. Morning and evening services took place regularly on Sundays as well as Bible and prayer meeting on weekdays. The message from the Cross and the love of the mission couple made these divine services unforgettable to the listeners. Sinners realized their lost condition, were saved and were added to the Mission congregation. The missionary couple had worked with many blessings for scarcely a year when more space was needed. It became necessary to rent larger premises. The German Baptist congregation helped by making it possible to rent their mission chapel on Manitoba and McKenzie, and this place was often filled with worshipful listeners. Besides the meetings in our mission chapel, weekly church services were held in Elmwood.

Since Winnipeg is the gateway to the West, so even at that time many families lived here for only a short time and then moved on. Therefore there was a constant coming and going. It was difficult to keep the number of the members up-to-date. Furthermore, the war years brought some difficulties: families came from the United States looking for a home in Canada. Brother Bestvater had to help the young Mennonite men in Manitoba obtain exemption from military service. In addition, house and hospital visitations had to be made and there were many poor people in the city. Brother and Sister Bestvater recognized the need for a missionary sister, and so the call came to me.

Brother and Sister W. J. Bestvater and family, 1913 - 1921

My deep desire, from childhood on, had been to place myself entirely into the service of the Lord wherever he would put me. I had just completed a course of study at the Herbert Bible School when the Bestvaters called me, and I took their call as from the Lord. I arrived on 1 December, 1915, with the assurance, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

Poem (Paraphrased)

Through the cares and troubles of the time comes a word
Of comfort and assurance from the eternal realms of heaven:
I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Throughout all times this bell rings over the cradle,
Over the grave, over the falling leaves of autumn,
Over the blossoming trees of spring:
I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

When my days are full of uncertainty,
I know where to find rest;
When the waves of time and destiny overwhelm me:
I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

You, the great Comforter, the Holy Word of God,
Bright and beautiful as the morning star;
You will shine into my closing dreams:
I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

(Kurt Tietze)

It was a cold December morning when I arrived, timid and hesitant. The streets and the roofs of the city lay deep under snow. There were many empty lots, and in the windows of some of the houses one could read signs saying, "To Let." I was welcomed into the home of Brother and Sister Bestvater and was immediately drawn into plenty of work, for Christmas was near. The Sunday school consisted of seventy pupils divided into five classes. Brother and Sister Bestvater took me along on several visitations, and thus I was introduced to the work.

Brother Bestvater had also started a choir, which contributed

The first choir: Manitoba and McKenzie Avenues, Summer 1916 Row 1 (l-r): Sister Olga Klee; Lina Oehme; Tina Loewen; Sister Adela Rosea; Brother Hamburger, our deacon. Row 2: Sister Oehme, mother of Lina; Anna Thiessen; Anna Bestvater (now Redekop). Row 3: Brother Gottlieb Wensel, also Sunday School Superintendent for many years; Brother Schulz; Brother Bestvater; Brother Janke.

much to the glorification of God in the worship services.

Small and insignificant as our Mission work was in the beginning, we had the rare privilege of having a musical family among us. Not only one member of this family had that special gift but the entire family shared it. That family was the Horch family. The father of our well-known brother, Ben Horch, accompanied the congregational singing on the piano. Edward, Ben's older brother, accompanied our singing in the children's services when he was only twelve years old. It was a great asset, for the children were intrigued that a boy of their age could play piano. The Horch family often delighted our youth evenings with a song by the whole family.

New Areas of Work

House and hospital visitations were continued and a new work was started—that of inviting children to a worship service on Sunday afternoons and of inviting girls to a sewing class on Thursday evenings. We had invitations printed for this purpose. Our efforts were not in vain, for although these gatherings were very small in the beginning, they grew rapidly. Here children were told of the Savior, Christian songs were sung and prayers spoken. Through these meetings some children attended our Sunday school. We also had some Jewish and Polish children who attended our Sunday school regularly. Sister Bestvater (now Anna Redekopp, of Herbert, Saskatchewan) was a great help in this area.

It was not an easy task to go from house to house distributing tracts and talking to the people about their spiritual welfare. (We had tracts in seven different languages.) Sometimes we became discouraged. But when we had a number of children in our worship services and in our sewing class, it became easier. We listed names and addresses of the children, and when they were absent we visited them, thus also meeting their parents.

We experienced some deeply moving situations but also happy ones. In some cases we found a little old mother or father at home alone;

The family of Edward Horch

Sewing Class, summer of 1916

in other cases a sick member of the family or someone who was unemployed. We came with a message as firm as a rock, and this helped us to be admitted into the strange homes.

On one such occasion, we became acquainted with a sick old lady. Her sore feet were being treated daily by her daughter-in-law. She was happy for every visit and always insisted that we should come again. We visited her a number of times until one day we found the front door locked. We tried the back door and were about to go in when her son, a husky man who was splitting wood in the back yard, hindered our way. He placed himself in the doorway, hands on hips, and asked what we wanted. We told him. He looked at us sternly and said that if we should dare to enter his house once more he would make use of the axe he had standing before him. We were glad that we had at least been able to read the Word of God with the little old lady a few times.

On another occasion a girl asked us to visit her sick mother. When we arrived there, it was plain to us that she was very close to death. We prayed with her, sang softly and left. A few days later we visited the home again and found that the mother had died in the Lord. We were privileged to learn that the sick woman had always spoken of the angels who had sung so beautifully to her.

On the whole, the people appreciated our visits. If the mother was very busy, we talked with the children so that she could finish her work. In many cases we were permitted to take time to pray. We were often filled with wonder that the children would become curiously quiet when we sang a song, read God's Word and kneeled to pray.

Among the adults we found some who were like Nicodemus. They did not wish to testify in public, but deep in their hearts they had a strong desire to believe.

The Ladies Fellowship began their activities under the leadership of Sister Julius Haber on 2 February, 1916. We gathered once a month in the homes of the sisters for the purpose of Bible study and prayer. In addition, we made clothing for the poor of the city. We did not have mission sales (auctions) at that time since our Brethren had only lately immigrated from the various countries of Europe and were very poor. So

we had a unique opportunity to distribute clothing (which had been sent to us by friends of the Mission or which we had sewed ourselves) among the poor of the city.

Permit me one illustration. While visiting one family, I met a poorly-dressed woman. In answer to my question about where she lived, she gave me her address. I visited her shortly thereafter and came upon a pitiful scene. The eighty-three-year-old grandfather was sitting in a wheelchair near the stove, and close by was the old grandmother. The mother of the house was busy with four little children. Their beds were merely rags. How thankful they were when I returned soon afterward with some useful articles. With tears in their eyes, they thanked me for the blankets and clothing. Then I could also point them to the One who helps in all situations.

On such visits it also often happened that the older folks had received letters and were unable to read them. I was repeatedly invited to read the letters and also to write them. In this way I became acquainted with their sorrows and joys, and a heartfelt relationship grew between us.

In January, 1916, we started a young people's association. Since I was a secretary, I have the report of the first year:

> The First Report of the Christian Young People's Association of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Winnipeg, December 1916.
>
> "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). How beautiful that we can also say that Jesus was with us, he is with us and he will continue to be with us if we do our work faithfully and honestly before him.
>
> With grateful hearts we look back upon the past year, a year of blessing in which we as the Young People's Association could often feel the nearness of God. He has sustained us for the whole year and supported us in the work which we were able to do in this time. But as a Young People's Association we remain in his debt.
>
> Nine meetings were held. In these times we were able to edify ourselves through the presentation of various songs and lectures.
>
> In these nine meetings, thirteen themes were discussed and twenty poems recited, five solos, four quartet selections, eighteen choral songs, three male voice choir selections, six group songs, and two Russian songs were presented. Six lectures were given for the edification of those attending. For the advancement of the Mission we heard a report on the mission to the Russians here in our city.
>
> We are thankful to the Lord for these blessings and are looking joyfully

Anna Thiessen with the children's assembly on McKenzie and Manitoba Avenues

into the future and pray to God for much strength in the coming year so that our work as the Young People's Association may be a blessing and souls will be won for the Lord.

A Mission Hall in Winnipeg

Until that time the Home Missions Committee had taken care of the work, and we were supported by that Committee. As it was apparent that the work was growing and the Lord was blessing the work, the Northern District Conference in Waldheim, Saskatchewan decided in 1916 to build a mission hall in Winnipeg. A building committee consisting of the following brethren was elected: Brother David Loewen of Winnipeg, chairman; Brother J.F. Harms of Morse, Saskatchewan, secretary; Brother J.A. Kroeker of Winkler, treasurer for Manitoba and Brother G. Doerksen of Borden, Saskatchewan, treasurer for Saskatchewan. Since then the work here has been led by a City Mission Committee. On this occasion the offerings from the Thanksgiving services were designated for the City Mission, and my appointment by the Conference was made here.

The North End Chapel

We remained in our rented premises at McKenzie and Manitoba only until 23 September, 1917, when our mission hall on Burrows and

North End Chapel, Burrows and Andrews

Andrews could be dedicated. The little church that had been moved here in 1913, and which had been too small for a long time, was sold.

Brother J.F. Harms described the dedication of our chapel in the *Zionsbote* (1917) in the following report:

> Sunday, 23 September, 1917, the chapel built by the Northern District Conference was dedicated. It is a basement, thirty by sixty feet, built of stone and covered with a provisional temporary roof. The weather on that Sunday was beautiful, and dozens of cars filled with visitors from Winkler hastened here so that about 550 persons filled the hall. The choirs from Winkler and Winnipeg sang beautiful songs. Brother Bestvater offered the introduction, and the other speakers were Brother David Dyck of Saskatchewan, Brother Johann Warkentin of Winkler, and Brother J.F. Harms of Morse, Saskatchewan. The latter spoke on the suitable text: "The Gospel Is Being Preached to the Poor." Several ministerial brethren from various believers' churches in the city were present to bring their good wishes, and heartfelt brotherliness and joy was evident throughout the hall.

The building site on Burrows was a fine, convenient corner, acquired for $800 through the unselfish negotiations of Brother Johann Warkentin of Winkler. The building cost $5,600. Much work was done gratis; otherwise the cost would have been much higher. We thought it was high, but reasonable under the circumstances at that time. In view of this, Brother Bestvater visited the churches and received so much partly in cash, and partly in pledges, that following the dedication, only $400 was left unpaid. It took only about fifteen minutes for Brother Bestvater knew how to find several persons who gave $50 each, others $25, and a sizable group who gave $10 each. The general collection was enough to pay for the chairs.

So now we had our own mission hall. We named it North End Chapel. That place has become a blessing to many. Difficulties were not avoidable, however, for the war was not yet over, and our meetings were mainly in the German language. Because of this fact we were sometimes harassed, especially at the Sunday afternoon children's meetings. We did not give up the work even though children sometimes threw stones at us.

We also survived the time of the "Spanish influenza." It was a difficult time, for there was sickness in almost every home, and many died, including two from our small group. We were not spared but, praise

God, he graciously preserved us and carried us through the danger.

6.Various Activities.

Since we now had a permanent location, we could use it according to our needs. In the winter of 1917 we began a German language school on Saturday mornings. It was mostly for children who attended our Sunday school. We had many difficulties to overcome, for we lacked suitable furnishings and money. Wooden blocks were nailed together crosswise and boards were placed across the top. These served as writing desks. When a boy, or sometimes a girl, leaned his or her chest against the board, the board would move over to the other side. One can easily imagine that such makeshift arrangements added to the difficulties of instruction, and yet there are those who would otherwise not have learned to read and write German.The Sunday school continued without interruption, and when the brethren came from Russia, able teachers were available. Sister Margaret Kroeker was the first teacher.

In 1919 it was my privilege, with several other brethren, to go to the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Our Conference sent me there and then for a month to the Minneapolis City Mission for in-service experience. It was a month rich in blessings for body and soul. On this trip a Mennonite Brethren couple from Saskatchewan asked me, "Anna, what would you wish for in your work?" It was a quite unexpected question, and I had no idea what I should ask for. "Well," I said, "I would like a cupboard for the things the girls in our chapel make for the poor people, or, even more urgently, we need a sewing machine." To my surprise, the money for the sewing machine arrived. That machine has been serving the Mary-Martha Home year in, year out, and has fully achieved its purpose.

It was still wartime, but as was our custom at Christmas, following the Sunday school Christmas program, we went to sing the timeless Christmas carols for the sick and the lonely. At Easter we also went, during the early morning hours. We had no cars, but we did not find it difficult to walk, though the distances were sometimes long. One Easter morning we were stopped by a policeman after he had heard us sing the

Bible students in the basement of the Chapel, Burrows and Andrews, 1920

song: *Mein Vaterland, Mein Vaterland* (My Fatherland, My Fatherland). When Brother Bestvater explained that we were singing of the fatherland above, and not about Germany, we were permitted to continue singing.

For several winters Brother Bestvater and Brother P.C. Penner of Premont, Texas, conducted two-month Bible courses. Several brethren came from Saskatchewan and Manitoba to attend. The courses were a great blessing to us.

Our experience of that time remains vividly in my memory. It was a Sunday evening, and I met a little old mother at the door. Because she was concerned about her salvation, I accompanied her for some distance, and we talked about this and other concerns. When I said farewell, she said with urgency, "Come and visit me soon, and bring along a gospel song book, for you sing such beautiful songs." I promised her to do so. But sadly, shortly thereafter, I passed by a Lutheran church where a funeral was being held. I asked the women who were standing by who had died. To my regret, I learned that it was the woman who had begged me so urgently to visit her. I reproached myself deeply for my indifference for a long time, but I know the Lord forgives when we come to him in penitence. Yes, I experienced what the poet says:

Yet There is Time!
(A Paraphrase) (Matt. 25:45)

Yet there is time, yet there is time tomorrow,
One more day surely is no loss -
Tomorrow I can say it, tomorrow write!
That little service is so quickly done!
I really ought to visit that sick person.
The way there is not far -
But I can also go tomorrow;
Surely he is not expecting me today!

And that letter? She requested an answer,
But tomorrow is another day;
If she has waited this long,

She will have the patience for another short delay.

Ah, and that sick man - longing for your coming,
He has been hoping, waiting, hour by hour!
He had important things to tell you,
But when you came, he lay there pale and dumb.

And what you wished to do, to say, to write,
Your laziness postponed repeatedly.
Do you comprehend your omissions?
How your action, your word was longed for?

The Lord will come, and, Oh, he will not ask
Whether you prefer today, or perhaps tomorrow;
He asks just this: Are you ready today
Yes, today, are you quite ready to meet the Lord?

What we have left undone can never be completed;
The time does not return that we have lost.
What we neglected to do unto our brethren,
We neglected in service to our Lord

(Lu von Sell)

Workers Come and Go

In the years 1919 to 1922, Sister Maria Schroeder of Main Centre, Saskatchewan, and Sister Helena Neufeld of Bethania, Saskatchewan, served in the work of the Mission, each for one-and-a-half years. Sister Maria worked as a nurse, and Sister Helena made visitations and worked with the children. Unfortunately Sister Maria had to give up the work because of ill health, and Sister Helena moved to Los Angeles, California, with her parents. The service of these sisters was greatly appreciated.

Brother and Sister Bestvater had now completed eight years of pioneer work. But then they perceived the Lord's call to serve the Bible

School in Herbert, Saskatchewan. So they left us in the summer of 1921 and moved to Herbert. At that time the mission congregation consisted of fifty-nine members. That number is not large, but there were always many visitors present. The chapel was usually filled to more than capacity with attentive listeners. Brother and Sister Bestvater's last words to the Conference were, "As we are leaving, we do not ask for less but for even greater zeal in the continuation of the work in Winnipeg, for it is a necessary and rewarding service." Many souls were saved in the course of the years, and many a seed fell into good ground and brought forth fruit unseen by us.

After Brother and Sister Bestvater left us, Brother and Sister Erdman Nikkel, of Laird, Saskatchewan, continued the work.

The Lord continued to bless the various branches of the work. He sent us no great revivals, but conversions took place and souls were won to the Lord and added to the Mission congregation. When we consider the value of a soul as the Lord Jesus values it, we can say that the work was not in vain. The attendance at the meetings in the North End Chapel increased, and visits from newcomers were brisk. The Wednesday evenings and the Children's worship service were as well attended as the Sunday morning services. Brother Nikkel was in charge of the

From l-r: The sisters Maria Schroeder, Helena P. Neufeld, Anna Thiessen

Children's worship services at that time.

In June, 1923, I asked to be released from my work, for I wished to continue further studies in the Bible. Believing I perceived God's will, I went to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and completed the general course in two years. While there I had an opportunity to assist in various mission projects. I had the privilege of having the man of God, Dr. Torrey, as my teacher. When I had completed my studies, the Committee of

Brother and Sister Erdman Nikkel and Family, 1921-1925

the Winnipeg City Mission asked me if I would be willing to resume my work there. I had no money, but just before it was time to leave, a sister came and brought me a ticket, already paid for, to Winnipeg. The Lord gave me joy and inner peace, and so, after visiting my parents and members of my family in California and Saskatchewan, I returned to my beloved field of service. I found Brother and Sister C.N. Hiebert already actively involved in the work, having come from Waldheim, Saskatchewan, in July. The Committee had been corresponding with the Hieberts regarding an appointment in Winnipeg for some time, since Brother and Sister Nikkel, for various reasons, had left the work and moved back to Laird, Saskatchewan.

During my absence, Sister Lena Rempel, of Winkler (later Sister Johann Braun), had helped with the work of the City mission. She has since gone to be with the Lord. During the first thirteen years, the congregation of the City Mission grew fairly steadily and extended from the North End into Elmwood. We had contact with young and old through the following meetings: Sunday school, Sunday morning and evening worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings on weekday evenings, sewing clubs for young girls, choir practise, youth clubs and the women's association once a month. House and hospital visitations were made, for we have several hospitals here at all times. Our Mennonites came from far and wide because the rural areas of our province did not have as many hospitals as they have now.

At that time we had a Mennonite doctor, Dr. Hiebert, and that was the reason why so many came to Winnipeg for medical help. Because so many came, on certain days the General and St. Boniface Hospitals had lists of names of the German-speaking patients ready for us. That made it easier for us to contact them.

As the congregation of the City Mission had been without a missionary for a while, it was not easy to reorganize everything for Brother and Sister Hiebert. But they knew just how to gain the confidence and love of the brethren. We began immediately with the children's meetings, the German school, and on Thursday with a girl's association, which we later named the *Tabea Verein*.

God's ways are inscrutable, and it was certainly not by chance that he had led in the founding of a mission congregation here in Winnipeg. Although our work thus far had been primarily with High German-speaking people, without our knowledge or seeking, a new venture was opening for us. That will constitute a whole new chapter in the history of the City Mission.

2.

MISSION TO THE NEWCOMER MENNONITES

Immigration

In the years 1923-24, after much trouble and misery, the Lord opened the way for our fellow believers in Russia to come to Canada. Many came through Winnipeg, and so it happened that some single women were in search of employment in the city immediately on arrival at the Immigration Hall. The Mission stood by and assisted these sisters who had already survived much hardship. I was lodging with the C.N. Hiebert family, but since an hospitable pastor family always had a full house, I realized that I needed to find a place to live elsewhere. This I found at 608 Mountain Avenue, the Mary-Martha Home, another branch of the City Mission. I will have more to say about this in the section "Mission to the Young Women."

Brother and Sister Hiebert were not only hospitable but also opened their home for a clothing distribution centre. Many of the newcomers had only the barest necessities. Clothing and blankets were largely sent from the United States. While distributing the clothing, the Hieberts had many opportunities to comfort and minister to the needs of these brethren. They often visited the Immigration Hall and walked through the trains that stopped in Winnipeg for several hours or even a day on their way to the West. Tracts were handed out and advice and help given to those who needed it. Sometimes we held evening services in the Immigration Hall. Although it was not a space suitable for a church, the members of the families sat on suitcases, tables and benches, and young and old listened to Brother Hiebert relate the message of the cross. Those impressions remain unforgettable.

Experiences of Brother and Sister Hiebert

Brother Hiebert reports:

Our beginning of the work in Winnipeg was not easy, but the Lord was

with us and gave us many blessings. Praise the Lord!

The distribution of clothing was not without difficulties since we had the arrangement for this in our basement. People arrived daily asking for clothing. Since many were poor, they could not afford to go to a restaurant to eat, and so they often shared our meals and also stayed overnight. For weeks on end we had someone spending the night with us every night. My dear Tina, who is now with the Lord, did not have an easy time, but she never complained. Sometimes we were even accused of favoritism—someone claimed that someone else had been given better clothes. But we handed out the clothing as it came in and as it was suitable in size.

We also had many blessings in the distribution of clothing. Many thanked us with tears, saying, "If only we could give, for it is more blessed to give than to receive." On such occasions we could pray with the people and discuss their salvation with them. We had the joy of sharing in thanksgiving to God for salvation through Christ.

We had various experiences with the people as they arrived in the Immigration Hall. Whenever I was able to greet them, I would serve with a short message. I remember how many wept as we sang together songs such as "Meine Heimat ist dort in der Hoeh, wo man nichts weiss von Truebsal und Weh" (My home is in heaven on high, where affliction and woe are unknown). The people were receptive to the gospel.

Because the immigrants were not permitted to become a burden to the city, we sometimes had to deal with illness and even death. Twins were born to one family, one dying shortly thereafter and the other also being very sick. I asked the undertaker if it would be possible to hold the little corpse back from burial for a while since the other baby would probably also die and I wished to place the two little ones in one coffin and one grave. The Lord was with us even in such sad circumstances.

On one occasion I had to drive to Moosehorn. It was a cold winter and so I bought several hundred pounds of frozen fish there for one-and-a-half cents a pound. This gave me a fine opportunity to gladden the hearts of many a poor family.

We experienced many blessings in our meetings. Every Sunday evening we gave an invitation to sinners to make a decision to follow the Lord. I remember that for seven consecutive Sundays souls were won for the Lord.

One young girl who had been saved at an evening service came to our home, and I had to call her parents by long-distance telephone. With great joy she related her forgiveness of sins and asked her parents and her brothers and sisters to forgive her as well.

We also had many blessings during testimonies by brethren when they related how the Lord sought and found them. What a joy to baptize them and show

the world that they had given their hearts and lives to God!

Further blessings were received in the many house and hospital visitations. Sister Agatha Klassen was with us for several years. She was like a mother in the home, and thus my dear Tina could accompany me on these visitations.

One day, while making visits in the sanatorium, we met a woman patient who was close to death. In answer to our question whether she was a child of God she replied, "That is my concern just now." We reminded her that Jesus has already done everything concerning our sins, as stated in Colossians 2:13 and 14: "...And you hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us." And further, John 5:24 tells us, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.' Her husband told us that when she died three days later, she had her finger on John 5:24, saying, "I have eternal life."

Times of Blessings in the North End Chapel

The immigration period of our brethren from Russia was an extraordinary time, not only for those who came from overseas, but also for us who had the privilege and pleasure of welcoming them. We were able to help them adjust to a new and strange land according to our means. In 1926 the membership in our Chapel nearly doubled as immigration was very heavy. The Chapel was too small; it was always filled to overflowing. Souls were saved and baptisms took place.

This was a particularly stirring time, for many of our people came through on heavily loaded trains. They had endured many hardships in the cruel land of suffering. Here in a free country, they immediately looked up to their brethren believers. By many ways and means they came to our meetings. Our Chapel was the only Mennonite church in Winnipeg. (Today, after thirty years, there are nine.)

One Sunday a few people in the Immigration Hall decided they would look up our church. They had no exact idea where to find it. They had been merely told they should take the Selkirk streetcar. After they had done this and had sat down, they noticed an elderly woman with a Bible. "So," they said to each other, "we'll get off where the woman gets off, and where she goes, we'll go, too." And following this thought and action, they arrived at the right place. They had not erred in their judgement. The woman was our Sister Schamansky. She has been with the

Lord for a long time now, after a life of many blessings.

The little church on Burrows and Andrews was always filled to overflowing. It became apparent that a larger place of worship was needed, for many of the newcomers stayed in the city. Sometimes they found employment, and sometimes they had to wait until the Immigration Hall permitted them to continue their journey. Some came after surviving want and fear, and sometimes they were separated from their loved ones. Others had not put their spiritual welfare in order, and under the burden of sin, they submitted their lives to the Lord. There were many conversions and many hours of blessings followed by baptism. Baptisms were held in the Assiniboine River in the West End of our city.

The Committee of the City Mission took steps to acquire a larger meeting place. Since Brother C.N. Hiebert was well known and had the confidence of the churches in the United States and Canada, he undertook many fundraising excursions in aid of a larger meeting place. The preacher brethren P.J. Kornelson and F.F. Isaak led the services and did much of the work connected with the Mission during his absence.

More Workers

Brother and Sister H.S. Rempel, 1929-1935

Since newcomers were still arriving in increasing numbers, Brother and Sister H.S. Rempel, of Winkler, Manitoba, were appointed by the Conference to help while brother Hiebert was away. They made

Baptism at the Assiniboine River, 1928

many house visitations and served the lonely, the forsaken, the sick and the strangers with the message of salvation. The Lord blessed many Friday morning prayer meetings conducted by Brother Rempel.

The time of service for Sister Rempel was very short. The Lord called her home in April, 1930, and she was mourned by Brother Rempel, five children, the Mission congregation and many friends. In May, 1932, Brother Rempel married Sister Anna Neufeld, of Winnipeg. They continued the work with the Lord's blessing. In 1935 they accepted the work of the City Mission in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Further Developments in the Work of the City Mission:

North End

Our meetings at the North End Chapel consisted of four Sunday meetings: Sunday school, morning and evening services, and children's meetings in the afternoon. On weekday evenings we had the following meetings: Monday, Young Men's Meeting and "Young Girls in Christian Service"; Tuesday, Bible study; Wednesday, prayer meeting; Thursday, *Tabea Verein*; Friday, choir practise; Saturday, German school and, during the summer, street meetings. Our preacher brethren made many house visitations.

The Women's Fellowship met every other week. Since it has a specific significance in a congregation or a mission congregation, I will report on it briefly. It was the deep desire of several sisters, and especially of Sister F.F. Isaak, to get to know the sisters of the congregation better. We had had a ladies meeting in earlier times, but because of the frequent coming and leaving of members of the congregation, that work had been interrupted and discontinued for almost three years. Following much thinking, planning and prayer, a small and modest beginning was made. In August, 1927, Sister Isaac invited all grandmothers seventy years and over to her home. Eight grandmothers and several other sisters accepted the invitation. We shared in a Bible study led by Sister Isaak. Soon there were further invitations to the homes from Edison Avenue, Kildonan, to Brooklands, and Charleswood.

"Young girls in Christian service."

Teachers: Helen (Neufeld) Linderbach, Mandy (Ross) Wagner, Esther (Hiebert) Horch

In February, 1928, Sister Isaak was elected as leader, and she continued this labor of love until October 1930 when she resigned because of failing health. Sister Kornelius Warkentin was elected to take her place. At the same time a Ladies Fellowship was organized at the South End, and for a number of years Sister Warkentin effectively directed both groups. In time, Sister Warkentin withdrew from the Ladie Fellowship at the North End in order to devote more time to the South End sisters. Sister C. DeFehr became the leader of the North End Fellow ship, and for twenty years her love and patience inspired us to be a service to others.

At the present (1955), Sister B.B. Fast is our leader. This fellowship has become greatly involved in the support and advancement of mi sions in the city of Winnipeg among the poor and sick. It also supports the Mary-Martha Home and donates money to foreign missions in Africa, South America and Old Folks Homes in Germany. The same could be reported about activities of the other ladies fellowships, but there is not space here for further details.

Kildonan

Several families in Winnipeg wanted sufficient land to be able to make a living with gardening and chicken farming. The brothers F.F. Isaak and J.J. Neufeld contacted municipal authorities in order to acquire land for immigrants. They were finally successful and able to do so in North Kildonan. Approximately five miles from the North End, they purchased a heavily wooded area of land. The company sold our Mennonites three ten-acre lots for a moderate price. The company cleared the bush, cultivated the soil, and prepared it for use. For every family that bought land there, the company built a house and supplied the lumber for a barn.

In 1928 several of our brethren families had settled in North Kildonan. This was a group of about thirty members who belonged to the North End Congregation and attended worship services there. But it was difficult and expensive to travel such long distances by streetcar. The need arose to have fellowship within the area, and on 18 November, 1928, the first service was held in the home of Brother and Sister J.J.

The Sunday school group in front of the J. J. Klassen home. The teachers are Nettie and Anna Klassen, now Mrs. Reimer and Mrs. Willms.

Klassen. All the brethren families opened their homes for fellowship in Bible study and prayer.

The first leader was Brother G. Klassen. Souls were saved and baptized together with those who were saved at the North End. Because of the steady growth in the new settlement, a small, modest house of worship was built in 1929. Sunday school and morning and evening worship services were held on a regular basis as well as Bible studies, prayer meetings and choir practises during the week.

South End

Brother P.J. Kornelson reports the following:

God's guidance is evident in the beginning and the growth of the South End Congregation. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we find them in Matthew 13: 31,32, have truly been fulfilled. A grain of mustard seed has become a great tree.

On 13 July, 1924, at seven o'clock in the evening, with my family and many others of our faith, I left Lichtenau in Russia, the land of our forefathers and where we had lived according to our faith for many years.

On 11 August of the same year, we arrived in Winkler. We found ourselves in a very different world. As it was harvest time, we joined in the work as much as our strength permitted.

In the following year, May 1925, we moved to Winnipeg. Winnipeg at that time presented a very different picture to what we were used to. Very few Mennonites who had recently arrived from Russia lived in the city. There were perhaps seven or eight families who had come to Winnipeg in 1923. Two single sisters, our Sister Schrier and her sister had been in Winnipeg since 1924.

At that time a missionary congregation was meeting in a basement hall on Burrows Avenue. This mission had been started by the Conference for the German-speaking brethren. The members of this congregation were mostly of Lutheran background. As there was no traditional congregation, my family and those brethren who came after us joined this congregation. In the fall of 1925 many more brethren came to Winnipeg from Russia to take up temporary residence here and there in the city.

The number of immigrants in Winnipeg, as we were called then, grew from day to day. As a result, the little group on Burrows Avenue became a large congregation. Many of those who had recently arrived were living south of the Canadian Pacific Railway lines. For purely practical reasons, the brethren living south of the lines were called South End, and those on the other side were called the North End.

The brethren who lived in North Kildonan likewise belonged to the North End so that the congregation consisted of three groups. So from all parts of Winnipeg we drove to the North End to attend the worship services. Those who did not have enough money to ride the streetcars simply walked. Almost every Sunday I walked back and forth twice to attend the church services on Burrows Avenue, especially since I was the assistant leader to Brother C.N. Hiebert. We were all generally poor in those days. Employment possibilities were few, and wages were very low. Our sisters were earning $8 a month and were thankful to get it.

We realized that this situation could not continue in the long run. Mothers with their children, especially in the cold winter, had to wait a long time at the stops for the connecting streetcar. We prayed and planned. We saw no other way than to organize our group at the South End and have our own worship services.

The first door that opened for us was an English church not far from the Canadian Pacific Railway Station, on 95 MacDonald Street, which we were able to rent.

We held our worship services there for some time. We experienced God's blessing in a marvelous way in that church. Many a brother minister preached the precious Word of God, and many a listener heard the Word from the Cross. But in spite of all that was beautiful and good, one thing created difficulty: our group was largely temporary. Brethren families came and went. Hardly had we come to know and love each other, when they moved away.

Then another problem presented itself: we were not able to rent the English church any longer. That was a heavy blow for us. We were compelled to look around for a new location. We found a hall on the second floor of Princess Street. We gathered there two or three times but we felt very uncomfortable for our neighbor on the same floor was a spiritualist group. Brothers and sisters of today, you can hardly imagine what feelings we experienced there. However, we took great comfort in the knowledge that the door above was always open.

Then we were able to rent a kindergarten area on Logan Avenue where we met and worshipped for some time. But all of this was not what we wanted, not what we were longing for. The idea of having our own church began to take shape. We were one hundred members, almost all poor, and yet we were talking of buying a church. The Lord heard us and helped us in a marvelous way. In 1933 we were able to buy a small church at 344 Ross Avenue.

South End had Sunday morning and evening services and Sunday school as well as prayer meeting and choir practise during the week.

A New House of Worship

Brother C.N. Hiebert had visited many churches in the course his travelling ministry to collect money for our new church. North End Chapel, our basement hall, was sold, and a new site on College Avenue near McGregor Street was acquired. Construction began in the fall of 1929. We were able to use the basement area during the winter and by the summer of 1930 the upper sanctuary was also completed. The cost was approximately $17,000. When our church was completed and dedicated that summer, there were three choirs to glorify the celebration: South End, Kildonan, and North End. We were all thankful and happy to have more space. Now we were able to welcome our brethren who were still arriving from the "land of distress" as well as our neighbors of Evangelical and Lutheran confessions.

Brooklands

In the early years, several families from the General Conference and other branches of Mennonites lived in the West End of Winnipeg, then called Brooklands. For several years, Sunday school and worship services were held every second Sunday in private homes. These were conducted by Brother A.B. Peters, who had been assisting in various ways since 1927. He started a Bible school on Thursday evenings, from to 8 o'clock for the working girls. In addition, for some twelve years he conducted Bible studies in the *Tabea Verein* in spite of storm and cold. What a blessing it was for the lonely and sick when Brother Peters would come and in his fatherly way explain God's word and pray. Many a cry, "No one cares about my soul," was stilled by his comforting words. We are grateful for the privilege of having had Brother Peters as coworker, friend and pastor among us.

Organization of the Churches

(Prose Paraphrase)
Saviour, your greatest works

Have silent, small beginnings.
What are we, Lord, before you?
But you are with us in our plight,
Your eyes will lead us in the fight;
For in your strength we put our trust.
Your grain of mustard seed, so poor and small,
Will finally be, without outward show,
A tree
Because you, Lord Jesus Christ,
Are his shelter,
Ordained by God.

(Albert Knapp)

The three churches of the Mennonite Brethren Congregation: Kildonan, North End and South End

God's guidance was evident in our work. Brother and Sister Hiebert were privileged to experience this through their energetic activities during the immigration period and through the cooperation of their coworkers, the brethren P.J. Kornelson, F.F. Isaak, A.B. Peters and B.B. Fast, as well as through the continually growing population, the

travellers, students and working people. Thus the little mission church Burrows Avenue grew naturally into three congregations.

At the beginning each church planned its individual program t be integrated with an internal structure. A representative council consisted of all ministers, all deacons and five brethren elected by each co gregation. All questions that related to the development of the church a whole were discussed and examined. Since this whole wide field, cons ing of four hundred members, had only one central council, all questio and problems were received there. Likewise pastoral responsibilities a

Rev. A.B.Peters, 1927 - 1950

visits were dealt with. It all required time and effort and, of course, the were expenses. House and hospital visitations could not be neglected. However, there were always brethren willing to serve: ministers, choir leaders and Sunday school teachers. What a privilege to have the oppor tunity to put your gifts into the service of the Lord, and what a privileg for our city!

And the congregations grew. South End and Kildonan had to build larger churches. South End was established as an independent con gregation in 1936, and Kildonan followed this step in 1938. Since then

three congregations each have their own church council. Each maintains its own mission program, for each has one or more mission Sunday schools, and the young people are happy to assist the city missionary in many-sided work.

Changes in the Work of the City Mission

The Canadian Conference had only one city mission, the one that consisted of several groups in Winnipeg since 1913. It was natural, then, that all city missions established subsequently were run by one Committee. Opportunities to establish city missions opened in Vancouver in 1931 and in Saskatoon in 1934. But these developments presented difficulties. Brother A.A. Kroeker read a submission to the 1933 Conference in Coaldale, Alberta:

> As a result of the work of the city missions of the various provinces, the conditions have been altered considerably and consequently new problems face the organization of the City Mission. In order to simplify the work and to give the churches and the individual delegates a sufficiently clear picture of this work, the combined session of the City Mission Committee of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, on the suggestion of the Rosthern Group, submit the following recommendation for changes in the regulations of the City Mission: Each province shall assume the administration and financing of the whole City Mission including the Home for Girls in Winnipeg (i.e., Manitoba for Winnipeg; Saskatchewan for Saskatoon, and Alberta and B.C. for Vancouver.)

The submission was approved and accepted. Each province now has its own committee for city missions and the work continues with the Lord's blessing. Since then City Missions have been established in Calgary, Alberta, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and in Brandon, Manitoba.Brief Experiences of our City Missions

While Brother and Sister Bestvater were serving in the City Mission, they won a mother and her son and daughter to the Lord. These three were baptized and became members of the congregation. The father remained hard and cold, making life very difficult for his family. Sometimes I had an opportunity during the day while the man was at work to visit the troubled mother. At those times she showed me her Bible, which she kept hidden in the bottom of a trunk so that her husband would not

tear it up completely. But, praise the Lord, the seed that had been plan grew. Brother Hiebert succeeded in winning that old man for the Lord Since then, almost every Sunday he prays, briefly and brokenly, word of praise and thanksgiving for his salvation.

Brother and Sister Hiebert continued the many aspects of clot ing distribution and assistance to the poor and lonely. In spite of this, they did not neglect the spiritual needs of the people. Brother Hiebert a special knack for winning their hearts. In this way he also won a you couple for the Lord. They had recently arrived from Russia and wishe to build a home for themselves in the new land. They went to a farm i order to work there, but a few years later they were back in Winnipeg. They attended the Winnipeg Bible Institute to prepare themselves for t work of the Lord. And so Brother Hiebert won these young, cheerful people for the work of the City Mission. They were our Brother and Sister W. Falk. For some years Brother and Sister Hiebert and Brother and Sister Falk worked together in the City Mission.

9. Changes in the Leadership of the Congregation of the City Mission

Three large congregations had been established in a short time because of the immigration of so many people. Among them were man excellent ministers, Sunday school teachers and choir conductors. But the growth of the congregation meant that our city missionary could no longer serve both as missionary and as leading minister of the North E congregation. The Conference requested that the Congregation of the City Mission relieve Brother and Sister Hiebert of the responsibility of ministering to them so that he would have more time for spreading the gospel to the many people of the city. Brother F.F. Isaak, who had taken the leadership during the absence of Brother Hiebert, was chosen as the leader of the North End Congregation.

Unfortunately, the city missionary had no place to conduct his meetings. Thus the congregation set up the following arrangement: the congregation would use the church sanctuary on Sunday mornings, and evening services would be conducted by the missionary. Weekday even

Brother and Sister W. Falk and family, 1936 - 1952

gs were also shared as suitably as possible. Unfortunately this arrangeent did not last long, for it is difficult to bring people of another ationality into our Mennonite worship services. The Sunday evening serices continued until 1941 when Brother and Sister Hiebert, who had rved in this blessed ministry for so long, left for the United States. rother and Sister Falk were then appointed to serve as full-time misionaries.

We would be amazed if we could cast our eyes over the earth nd observe the countless multitudes carrying out all kinds of Christian

services of love. Many serve in hidden places without loud proclamat
Many perform only the lowliest services. Yet every Christian service
love, regardless of how lowly and unimportant it may be, receives dig
nity and honor because it is part of the exalted plan of God. And so w
will turn to the next section of the work of the City Mission and see th
the young girls also have a share in God's plan.

Readiness

(Prose paraphrase)

Are you prepared to do your work,
Prepared to reach your greatest worth,
Prepared for heavenly bliss,
As for love's work on earth?

The master said: only he is faithful
Whom, at my coming, I shall find
In service true, who daily prays
To renew his covenant with me.
Who works with vigor and completes
What I have assigned to him,
And who with earnest zeal still strives
To wear the crown in heaven.

No fickle, frenzied action,
Can fill the inner void.
The Lord asks only: Are you prepared?
Will that great day not frighten you?
So take the light of spiritual vision,
Look to the throne with patient hope;
Maintain in all your service
A window open to heaven.

So do your work in this good time,
Show that you serve your Christ.
The Lord will thus find you prepared;
So he himself shall praise you justly.

(Ernst Schrein

3

MISSION TO THE YOUNG GIRLS

Introduction

Untitled
(Prose Paraphrase)

A service can never be a blessing
Unless we entreat the help of the Lord.
Only he gives the right ability and direction.
What is done without him cannot endure.
It is futile to strive and to struggle
If the Lord does not give the blessing.
To prosper, be it great or modest,
He gives courage, strength, patience and diligence.
(Eva von Thiele - Winkler)

Within the framework of the City Mission belongs the service to the young girls. It was the fall of 1925. Brother and Sister Hiebert and I were busy with home and hospital visitations. Also among the many mission services we performed were the visits to Immigration Hall. The number of immigrants was increasing rapidly, and it often happened that some had to wait several days before the continuation of their journey could be arranged. Those occasions became an opportunity for the Mission to present the joyful message of the cross to the distressed.

One had to be an observer of it, to appreciate what it meant to people when, after much suffering and privation, they arrived in a strange land and were met by the love of Jesus in the fellowship of their brethren. Our hearts were filled with compassion, especially for the often perplexed parents who had to leave their inexperienced daughters behind in a strange city to work. Some of the girls were actually hired straight from Immigration Hall, for employers were quick to get the cheapest help possible. This would result in some heartrending parting scenes, but

it was one way in which the debt incurred in coming to Canada could b paid. Every girl was anxious to earn her own way in life. But their shor lives had not prepared them for the maelstrom of the big city. The situa tion for the girls was really difficult, if it is sufficient to describe it thus Some had been separated from their families on the long voyage to Canada. Some arrived whose parents had been murdered during the Revolution in Russia. They had lost all their belongings and had come i a place where language, customs and people were strange. Who would receive and care for those many girls who had lost both home and parents? But God, who hears our cries and sees our distress, listened to the pleas of those sorely tested girls.

Under those circumstances it can readily be understood that ou sympathy and compassion were aroused. We tried to calm and comfort these girls, asking their names and offering to help. We made a note of the addresses where they were in service, and visited them. At those op portunities, we invited them to our services. In this way we came into contact with an everincreasing group of girls. Without having forseen it or searched for it, a new mission service had opened to us: the service o the working girls in the city.

How often at this time, when I considered the circumstances of the girls—so alone and helpless—I thought of the words of the psalmist "No man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). But the promise in verse 5 o the same psalm was also fulfilled: "O Lord..., Thou art my refuge and m portion in the land of the living."

Beginning of the Mary-Martha Home

Mary and Martha
(Prose paraphrase)

When Jesus was preaching on earth,
The weary wanderer's footsteps
Were led to the house of his friend, Lazarus,
Where he was joyfully and lovingly received.
Mary sat at his feet,

While Martha busily prepared the meal.
How much did Martha love the Lord!
I see her nimbly and vigorously
And with pleasure working in this circle,
Giving strength and food to the wanderer.
Could we, too, serve the shepherd of our souls
With so much love, joy and diligence?

But would that we also could be like Mary
Who willingly gave her Lord her time,
With questions about God and eternity;
Who learned about him and his kingdom.
Could we thus also greet him
With worship and love at his feet?

Martha's diligence is deeply impressed in my mind,
And Mary's heart, devout and pure.
Lord, let me be both Martha and Mary;
Let only this become my goal:
That I may choose first what is needful,
Service in the Kingdom with my full heart and soul.

The Home begun here at 608 Mountain Avenue

In the fall of 1925 the girls were given accommodation in my wo rooms upstairs. But the little rooms were too small, and we rented a hird and fourth room. When I didn't have enough space, the Hieberts

kindly took the girls in. We did not yet foresee that these rooms would come a Girl's Home. We were simply extending a helping hand to the girls in need. But the four upstairs rooms were always full, particularly on Thursdays and Sundays. Not a corner was left unused; even the stair

This is the way the girls arrived.

way was put to use. The girls always had named this place *Maedchen-heim* (Girls' Home) and so we left it that way and named it the "Mary-Martha Home." Worship and service was to be our motto.

In the fall of 1926 the General Conference of Mennonites and the Baptists each had a well-established home for the working girls. However, the increased immigration also meant an increase in the number of girls, and it did not appear that the immigration would cease. The Lord sent us more and more homeless girls, and we were at a loss about

Splitting wood l-r: Mrs. Janzen with her son, Njuta Toews, and Tina Friesen

what to do. We simply needed more room for them. We brought the matter before the Lord repeatedly in prayer, reminded by the psalmist that "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalm 94:9).

On 14 May, 1927, after a long period of waiting, we were able to rent the downstairs of the house as well. Our home now had seven rooms. With the help of the girls who were presently staying there, the rooms were soon arranged. We were filled with courage and joy when we experienced the Lord's help in the form of donations of cups, plates, money for linoleum, spoons and much more. A woman in the neighborhood who heard about us, sent us several valuable items, including a striking clock that is still in use today. If all those furnishings could talk,

they would be able to tell us many stories. Up to that time our room ha been heated by the Janzens, who lived downstairs, but now we had to take charge of everything. The girls demonstrated that they could take care of this need, as the picture clearly shows.

In June, 1927, the Canadian Conference took this newborn chi into its lap and gave us Sister Warkentin, of Winkler, as a coworker in our important and necessary work. She had a cheerful nature and put li and spirit into the place.

However, it soon became apparent that the home was too smal and anxious questions arose: "How will we cope?" The girls sat and w as sometimes they had to wait a long time for a position. We did not ha a telephone in the house. At the beginning we telephoned at the neighbor's but that was awkward and took a lot of time. God took care this little matter too. The *Tabea Verein*, which originated at the same ti as the Home, arranged to have a telephone installed. That eased the wo very much.

God's loving care and support throughout the winter filled us with gratitude. On 14 May, 1928, we held an evening of prayer and thanksgiving at the Home. Several friends of the Home had followed o invitation and helped us praise the Lord, and at the same time prayed th he would grant us a larger place. We did not anticipate that God would fill this need so quickly, but Brother Hiebert informed us very shortly thereafter that he knew of a suitable building at 413 Boyd Avenue. We went to see it right away, and it really was both practical and beautiful. The idea that we might call this house our home seemed too good to be true, but the Lord always gives more than we deserve.

This undertaking was not to be without problems, however. Than owner wanted to rent the house only on the condition that she could sell it anytime. In addition, it was a large building connected with so many responsibilities, which fact caused many sleepless nights. Up to now, we had paid $35 a month during the winter and $30 during the summer. Buha the words in Job 22:28, "Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be e tablished unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways," and the su port of several brethren encouraged us to go ahead.

Change of Residence

On 1 August, 1928, we moved into the new building. Moving involved expenses, work, and difficulties. But our effort was also wonderfully crowned. Six chairs were donated to the Home following anxious questions: "Lord, will you help us here as well?"

The Lord led us during that winter in a marvelous way. However, we had only been in that Home for several months when someone came to look at the building. We had just cleaned it thoroughly, and made the necessary adjustments and repairs, and what now? It was not long before we received a letter stating that we must vacate the house on 1 August, 1929, for it had been sold.

Looking for a House and Moving Again

Once more we were in a bad situation. It was not easy to find a suitable building on a suitable site for a large family. No one wanted to rent us a house that was in good repair. I finally found a house on Magnus Avenue and had made a $20 down payment, but it was far from the streetcar and difficult for the girls to find, as well as not being practical. Then we found a house on 398 Mountain Avenue. This one was more suitable for the girls, since they were familiar with the area. We decided to take it. Here we paid $50 a month, even though the house was too small and unsuitable for our work. Yet our spirits were encouraged by the knowledge that the Lord would do battle for us, for it was he who was sending us the girls. He would continue to care for us, even if not right away. He just wanted us to learn to trust him more. This conviction gave us courage to move, and when our lease had run out, we were ready for another change.

The Conference paid us $20 a month for rent and the rest came from donations from friends and from the rent paid by the girls. It happened sometimes that the income did not cover the expenses, and one had to manage the money very carefully. But this was never a tedious job, for the payments showed daily how the Lord was interceding for us. One Sunday evening I realized that I did not have the rent money for

Monday when it was due. The kitty was empty. I had one way open—the way up. I had an idea: *Go to the Hieberts, for the mail is sometimes sent there*. I went there. Sister Hiebert and I talked for a while. She did not mention any mail, and I hesitated to ask or let her see how anxious I was. As I somewhat sadly started to leave, Sister Hiebert called to me: "Anne, here is some mail for you. I almost forgot to tell you." I hurried into my room and opened the letters. There was enough money to pay the rent on Monday.

Development

One day in the fall, a brother from the greater Winnipeg area brought us vegetables from his garden. He asked how things were going and I related some of our needs: the house was too small, yet the number of girls coming in was still increasing. It was difficult to house the girls adequately when we were anxious to do it as well as possible. We chatted about buying a house, and, on leaving, he handed me a quarter, saying, "This is the beginning of your building fund." I almost laughed, but reflected, "Little is much when God is in it." Soon thereafter I began talking with others about our needs, and it didn't take long before I could carry $50 to the bank for a building fund.

Moving Again

We had now become acquainted with several houses in the North End. Among others, we had also seen the one in which we live now, at 437 Mountain Avenue. It was suitable in regard to its floor plan, and so it became the object of our prayers. And God did not let us down. Brother F.F. Isaak, who always took an interest in our affairs, got in touch with Black and Armstrong, the firm that owned it, and with the indication that we wanted to buy it someday, we rented the house for $60 per month.

The building was in a run-down condition. The verandas in front and back were hanging down, the steps were broken and the screens in the veranda were torn. The basement was full of ashes and junk. But the floor plan was suitable and that was why we wanted it. Black and Armstrong did their part, and the rest was soon taken care of by

rdworking hands.

We moved on 1 September, 1931. In this move we also experienced God's help, for many necessities for the home were donated by friends.

The monthly rent of $60, as well as the responsibility for the many girls, sometimes depressed me. One morning when I was going to the city on business I prayed: "Lord, if this move was your will, send something for the Home today." When I came home a mangle for our laundry was standing in the veranda. I was deeply humbled by my lack of faith. The Lord was sending us girls; would he also not care for us?

The Building Society

As we were living in a time when we saw the need for the Home not only in the present but also for the future, a building society was organized. The Committee for this society consisted of the following people: Brother F.F. Isaak, Chairman; Brother Jacob Wedel, Secretary; Brother C. DeFehr and Anna Thiessen. This Committee organized the raising of money for the purchase of a house. Money from savings banks, memberships, and various donations were received. We did not falter, for the building fund, which we began with twenty-five cents, was steadily growing.

At the beginning, the committee was concerned with finding ways and means of raising money to buy a house. But I turned to these

Brother and Sister C.A. DeFehr

Brother and Sister F. F. Isaak

Mary-Martha Home, 437 Mountain Avenue: Front and Back

brethren for help in the many and various problems of running the Home, and so the Committee became not just the Building Committee but simply the Home Committee. Whenever questions or difficulties arose we gathered for prayer and discussion. Through the Committee, the purchase of the house became a reality. After Brother F.F. Isaak was called to be with the Lord, we elected brother William Falk. These brethren have helped us a great deal, and may the Lord reward them from the riches of his grace. The sisters have also contributed their part in the furtherance of the Home.

Brother and Sister Jacob Wedel

Buying the Home

The Lord gave us his blessing, and after we had rented the hou for two years, we were finally able to make the purchase. The rental su of $750 every year was too much and too difficult; year after year to raise this amount and yet achieve nothing! So in the spring of 1931 we were able to purchase the house for $3,500. We made the down payme of $750 and took out a mortgage for $2,000. The payment of the remai ing $750 was to be made as we were able. The Conference gave us $25 month. We were so happy and grateful that this purchase had become reality, for we were no longer obligated to think about finding a home moving. One day we would also forget about paying interest!

After two years we were to pay $300 on the $2,000 mortgage. We were in no position to save this sum of money. The Building Fund Committee and the girls brought the matter before God in prayer.

We literally experienced what is promised in Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." In two months we had collected not only $300 but over $800, giving us the opportunity to make a larger payment than we were obligated to make. This time of special blessing from God has remained unforgettable.

How God Sent the Money

The smallest sum was		.12
The largest sum was a cheque for		200.00
Donations in silver		3.20
Fourteen donated	.50	7.00
Seventy-nine donated	1.00	79.00
Twenty-three donated	2.00	46.00
Eleven donated	3.00	33.00
Five donated	4.00	20.00
Fourteen donated	5.00	70.00
Twelve donated	10.00	120.00
One cheque	20.00	20.00
Two cheques	25.00	50.00
One cheque	50.00	50.00
Various large and small cheques		136.86
		835.18

Difficulties

Up to this time I have been telling you how wonderfully the Lord helped. Now I want to relate some of the difficulties. From the beginning we had one or two girls who lived in the Home while attending Normal School. They paid their monthly rent, which helped to cover expenses. We were happy to have a few boarders who contributed to the upkeep of the Home on a regular basis, because the girls who came to the Home while looking for work often had to wait a long time before finding a suitable job. They were not able to pay rent to the Mary-Martha Home as soon as they began work. First they had to earn their own way. The wages were very low, as low as $8, $10, $12, or sometimes $15 per month.

Once in a while some employers paid $20 or even $30. This variation in wages presented difficulties because every girl wanted to get $30. Unfortunately, even with the best intentions this was not possible, for the circumstances could not be altered.

After a girl had worked for several months and could say she was experienced, and the employer gave the girl a good reference, things became better. Then she would be offered better wages. As the employers became more and more acquainted with our Mennonite girls, things got better for them.

One day a girl who had experience in housework in Winnipeg came to us. It was not difficult to find a suitable job for her. "As soon as I earn $30 a month," she said, "I will give the first $30 to the Home." She kept her word.

Expansion

The time came when some of the girls preferred day work to working by the month. In this way their Sundays were free. They started with $1 a day and were happy to get it. They asked for a room in the Home. What was our obligation here? In the course of the years the Home had paid off all its debts. We opened our hearts and hands and made more single rooms available, for sharing a room only leads to dif-

ficulties in the long run. So the house with eleven rooms became a building with sixteen rooms.

Our heavenly Father did not desert us in this matter either. How often we turned to the Lord when times were dark or the responsibility for hundreds of girls depressed us, or when we had financial worries. "Lord," we prayed, "it is your work, you started it, not we, and you must continue to help." And with the additional rooms came the necessary furniture. If our household could talk, each item, from teaspoon to the stoker, could tell a story of how it got here.

The House as a Home

(Prose paraphrase)

This home, if you lived here alone, would offer no friendship and comfort.

This home would thus be empty, void of Christian love in spite of grand furnishings.

Where would be the blessing that God gives if the wanderer did not know that here he would meet a soul full of compassion?

This home shall be a home for others, a place on earth dedicated to love and faith.

This home shall be a place of compassion for the poor, as taught by the Lord.

Sunshine fills such a loving home in spite of ice and snow, and the eternal spring of love calls forth the flower of mercy.

In order to help the girls spiritually and materially, we need a place, first of all, from which we can help them. Thus the Home serves the girls as a place to live. But a Home is not only a place where you find accommodation and care for your good money but also a place where order, industry and cleanliness rules and love abides. If the latter is missing, no matter what else is there, it is not a true home. That is the reason we chose the beautiful name Mary-Martha Home. Mary represents worship, and Martha, service. Both must be found in a home. Martha service only would make work a burden, but with the spirit of Mary it receives a vision.

Here the girls found a refuge when out of work, when ill, or whenever they experienced other difficulties. We were privileged to offer the Home to girls who became ill in their workplace and were brought here by their employers after a physical and emotional breakdown. Some had no parents, and the fear of the future, should their health fail, was a worry. But with the help of God and the friendly assistance of the Home sisters, they were restored again.

Here are several illustrations of what the Home meant to strangers and travellers. A sick woman wanted to be treated by a Mennonite doctor, and we were able to keep her for ten days following the operation. At home her husband was ill with cancer, and they were very poor. To see her recovery and her gratitude was all the payment we wanted. Many women and girls who were able to stay at the Home were thankful for its existence.

One of our graduate nurses had made many trips overseas. She had seen much poverty and suffering, and had visited many large cities. Whenever she came to Winnipeg, she visited the Home. One day she came to me, and handed me $20 and said, "If all big cities had a Mary-Martha Home, my travels would be much easier."

One day a mother from Poland came to us with her two daughters. When we had received the girls kindly and answered the mother's questions satisfactorily, she raised her hands and thanked God from the depths of her heart that he had sent her to Christian friends in this strange land. She continued her journey in peace, knowing that her daughters were in good hands.

The Home served as a place to stay for girls who were out of work and looking for employment, and for those who were sick. Sometimes people passing through Winnipeg stayed here. Women missionaries made the Home their headquarters while in the city. The Home was also a residence for girls working in factories, doing housework by day and attending Normal School. In addition, girls lived here who were taking a sewing course for several months or a three-month class in nursing theory, or various other classes. We also had nurses and teachers staying with us for shorter or longer periods when we could accommodate them.

For a small number of girls, the Mary-Martha Home is the only home that they have. They are the smallest in number but represent the largest need, requiring wisdom and understanding in this Home. When girls live together under one roof, complete cooperation is necessary. The love of Christ overcomes the differences in personality, social and economic job differences and differences in church affiliation. The girls also carried the largest share of the financial support of the Home with their monthly payments.

There were sorrows of many kinds and many tears were shed. Sometimes it was homesickness for the old country or for the parents far away; sometimes it was fear of a new job. But there were also tears of repentance and remorse over sins and tears of joy over victory and forgiveness of sins in the battle of life.

The Home as a Job Placement Agency

At the beginning, when the girls arrived we took them to the Employment Office, but this action was almost always a failure. The girls could not speak English and the employers were not familiar with our girls. For several weeks we set out every morning with renewed hope and returned every evening tired and dejected. Something had to be done. We used the neighbor's telephone, but that did not work well, and so we had the telephone installed in our room and placed advertisements in the daily papers. Then things began to get better.

Job placement was time-consuming work. Daily requests from far and wide came in, asking for girls. The "Mary-Marthas", like other Mennonite girls, had acquired a good reputation through their quiet, pious conduct and their faithfulness. Job placement required total dedication and punctuality on our part if it was to be successful. We treated every telephone call with care, accurately noting the name, address and wage offered by the woman requesting a maid. We accompanied each girl who was new to the city to her place of work so that we would know where she was and, if difficulties arose, we would understand the circumstances better.

Looking for jobs was not satisfactory. The women would

telephone for a maid and ask to see one after the other until they found one that suited them. Sometimes a woman came to the Home and looked over the girls to select the one who pleased her. This was unpleasant for the girls as well as for us who were in charge. We put a stop to this by making a rule that the woman had to hire the girl whom I considered best suited her situation. Today (1955) all that is changed; the girls choose the place that suits them best.

Choosing employment for the girls was not enviable work. The girls came from various homes and environments, with different personalities, upbringing, hopes and aspirations. Our young girls, in many instances, had no idea what it meant to "serve". To instruct and inform them of their obligations took much time, love and patience. This was true not only for the girls but also for the employers and the person arranging the employment. Naturally enough, if a woman was assigned a girl who was not satisfactory to her, the person who selected the girl was to blame—she should have known better.

We have been looking at the darker side of the work, but there were also many bright sides that I want to emphasize. We were not dealing with lifeless objects but with the immortal souls of girls. And to help them was our goal. We had a fine opportunity to help them pay off their immigration debts, to help their parents financially, to help the girls overcome the difficulties of a new country and separation from their families, and to teach them faithfulness in service. It was always a source of joy for us when girls came to us, sometimes with tears of happiness, saying, "There, I've paid off my debt to the Immigration Board," or "Just so many more months and I can make my last payment to the Board." Even today there are still some who have this unpaid debt—some of those who came with private assistance or through an organization other than the Mennonite Immigration Board. We serve these as well and help them to find work.

Many girls work in the city in order to earn money to attend various Bible schools. It also happens quite often that women who have hired a maid through us, telephone to thank us for the fine girl we sent them, be it to work by the month or by the day. It is pleasing to realize

that no more want ads in the daily papers are necessary, for the godly and upright conduct of the girls speak for itself. The women, the girls and the telephone all need attention, and we do our best to meet all their needs. In all of this we consider not only material needs but also spiritual emphasis. May we always think, whenever the doorbell or telephone

l-r: (Standing) Sisters Tina Friesen and Lena (Isaak) Sawatsky (Sitting) Anna (Kroop) Andreas, B.C. Mariechen (Doerksen) Kasper, India

rings, "Awaken my heart and show your love, for whoever is coming or calling is being sent by the Lord."

In this work there is also a good opportunity to talk to the women about the Bible, for our name stimulates conversation. It happens quite often that when a woman calls she will say, "Is that Mary, or is it Martha—I guess they are both good." And we relate the lovely story of Bethany. Our work with the girls also gives us the right to invite them for

Thursdays and Sundays. And that is the topic of my next section.

The Home as a Meeting Place

According to the law, an employer is required to give the girl working in her household one free afternoon and evening during the week, and every other Sunday afternoon and evening off. We chose Thursday. At the same time, we requested that the girls be given a box lunch on their day off, as they were working for very low wages. For many women this was a new idea, and some were unwilling to comply. But when I said I would not send them a girl otherwise, they became willing and in some cases personally ensured that the girl received a substantial lunch.

I will now describe a typical Thursday, for Thursdays generally followed the same pattern. On this day the Home is ready to receive the girls who are free for a few hours. I hear the door open softly, and a young, shy girl comes in. Soon the door opens again, and two laughing girls enter, relating how they have found the way to the Home on their own. And so they come, one after the other. It is not always easy for the girls to come to the Home on time. For one thing, many do not get away from work until late afternoon. That leaves little time to go to the shoemaker or the dentist. Sometimes they have to buy a uniform or another necessity. Travelling by streetcar also takes time, but they come, even if they are late and tired. By five o'clock they hurry in in groups.

Most come carrying their lunch package. First they go into the basement where we have a small room for their coats as well as for suitcases and other items that the girls who are staying for an undetermined time have brought with them. Here they remove their outer clothing and then come upstairs into the living room. Eagerly they read their letters, for they always expect letters from family and friends. If they have received a letter, the joy is great. It doesn't take long for them to go into little groups, reading letters and doing handwork. One takes her guitar, plays and sings a song; another sits at the piano and teases out a tune. Some sit around a little table reading the weekly magazines and newspapers such as *Der Bote*, *Der Zionsbote*, *Steinbach Post*, and the

Rundschau. Issues of the latter we always have on a string so that the girls can easily find them. (Later, the editor sent us two copies.)

Amidst cheerful conversation, I would come into the room, greeting each of them by name. Among them I see one who looks depressed. Concerned, I take her into my room. Poor child. She is barely seventeen, and already Satan has tried to rob her of every ray of hope and light. A while ago she was praising God's forgiveness and grace, but now all this has vanished. We pray, but how powerless I feel in such a situation! But the words in Isaiah 57:15 console and raise this child's spirit: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

(A Paraphrase)
It is easier to make a sacrifice
That everyone can see
Than with hands perform a service
That is hidden from the world.
If you occasionally lack recognition
That visibly crowns you before men,
You may nevertheless count on a better blessing
That will beautify your life's work.

(Martin Ulbrich)

The bell rings and calls us together for coffee (which was prepared by our Sister Lena Isaak, now Mrs. Gerhard Sawatsky, of Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, and later by Sister Tina Friesen. The latter sister is still active here, performing the many "Martha" services.). Lunches are taken out, and from everywhere in the house the girls come into the living room, seating themselves in readiness to be served by those who have coffee duty. We sing a song together, and everybody joins in the animated conversation. One of the songs we often sing is also a prayer:

(Prose Paraphrase)

We thank you, Father, with a happy spirit,
You want to satisfy us now, you are so generous;
You fill our hearts with joy,
You still our sorrows and heal our pain.
The Blood of the Lamb fall on us like dew,
From morning until evening, yes, until you come.

The young girls become very intimate and temporarily forget their hard work and their deep homesickness. Soon another kind of music can be heard in the kitchen. Busy hands wash the dishes, and in no time at all, everything is put away. After the repast books were taken from the library and eagerly read. (We had a small library in the Home.) Others are willing to make a few visits before the *Tabea=Verein* (Tabitha Fellowship) meeting. The Home resembles a beehive on these Thursdays when all the girls pursue their various activities.

Sick Visitations

Not all of us can preach like Paul nor have we had a vision such as his, but all of us, like the Samaritan woman, can invite people to come to the Lord Jesus. That poor woman was able to do an effective ministry, and we may also carry the message of the cross to forsaken widows and orphans. We visited an old grandmother in her little room. She was sitting by the window with her big, open Bible in her lap. She could no longer see very well, but she was drawing comfort from God's Word again and again. She was particularly pleased when she had a visitor. Her past had witnessed many hardships, but she could say, "Lord, Thy will be done." And she expressed her feelings with the words:

Whatever befalls, it comes from You.
I question not: what is this to me?
Your eye discerns what is right for me.
As long as I know this is Your way.

We hasten on to the attic room of a lonely orphan girl. She had

been absent from the Home and the *Tabea Verein* meetings for a long time. Since she had no relatives or friends in the city, we wanted to inquire into her well-being. When we found her, she was so depressed from having received harsh criticism from her landlady that we had a hard time comforting her. But she was able to come to the Cross and accept the Lord Jesus as her personal friend and Saviour, the Saviour who helps in all circumstances.

On another occasion we visited a deeply sorrowing mother. Her son had gotten into bad company and was now being sent to a reform institution. With bowed head she sat, moaning and lamenting. What could we say to comfort her? Pray, pray and God can still turn everything around.

One day we were at the General Hospital, visiting an old gentleman who had had a serious operation. When we approached his bed and spoke German to him, he said, "Now, that's so nice when someone comes who speaks German." We quoted Bible verses, and amid tears he replied, "That is so good for me."

A young woman who had been in the Hospital for three months was deeply moved when we prayed with her. Her husband was still somewhere in the steppes of Russia, and her only child was sick in a Catholic hospital. Yes, the message of the Cross is unique, helping us to go forth. Might our influence be like that of the Samaritan woman, for through her work many believed on Him.

Experiences of the Girls

It was a day in December. We did not think anyone would be coming anymore when I was called to the door. There stood a handsome girl. She had come from abroad, and we were curious to learn "where from" and "where to." This is her story:

> We travelled to Moscow, Mother, my sister and I. We came to Germany, and because of Mother's health, we had to stay there. During the four years we had to stay there, my sister and I earned some money. Mother had to remain in the hospital for a long time. However, she recovered sufficiently for the doctor to give her permission to continue our journey. Since we had two sisters with families in Canada, and father had died in Russia, Mother's dearest wish was to see her

daughters once more. But when we finally had our visas, the joy was too overwhelming, and after four days she entered into eternal rest.

This is what we looked like in our uniforms.

Another sister, Susie Braun, worked here for a number of years. Diligently and punctually she came to the Home and the *Tabea Verein*. She had another sister in Europe. She often asked for our intercession in prayer so that her sister might be able to come here. We made this an object of our prayers. It seemed as if all efforts by parents and friends were in vain. This was particularly disappointing for her mother. Then finally, after a seven-year separation, there was to be a reunion. A telegram came notifying them that Mariechen Braun would land in Canada in January. Full of excitement, impatience and doubt whether this would actually happen, Susie waited for the day when the train would bring her long-

awaited sister. And truly, one night Susie telephoned, saying, "She has really come!" And in a few minutes they were at our door. What a reunion of greetings and questions! How wonderfully God leads His people! With the next train they left to see their parents.

The following is the experience of another young girl as she told it to me:

My parents were far away, and I am sometimes very homesick. The people for whom I work are good; the house is nice, but this does not replace my parental home. I had only been at this place a few days when my mistress instructed me, before she went out, to paint the baby carriage. I guess I was too shy to tell her that I had never painted before. *What should I do?* I prayed. There was a knock at the door and a man came in who wanted to sell me paint. I told him that my mistress had already bought the paint, and I was just preparing to paint. He asked me if I had ever painted before. Since I had never done this, he said, 'I will show you.' And he showed me until the carriage was almost finished. When my mistress came home, she was surprised at how nice the carriage looked.

Some Girls Write about the Home

We came from Russia conscious of the fact that we would be servant girls. But never did we realize that the Lord would give us a home in the city. We praise and thank Him for this. We were all without a home when we came here, but many girls were also without parents and thus were alone in a strange land.

But our heavenly Father takes care of us and has given us this beloved Home. Possibly some of the young girls would get lost in the big city if they did not have the Home to go to. And where would we spend our free time, for not all girls have relatives or friends in the city? We look forward to the times on Thursday and Sunday afternoons when we can go to the Home. In the Home we are warmly greeted by the sisters. And how reassuring is the friendly smile, the kind word or the warm handshake. We know we never come too often, and the doors were always open. If we are sick or without a job, we always know that we can turn to the Home for a place to stay. Even the women where we work appreciate the fact that we girls have a place where we can go. We are particularly happy that many a girl's soul has found peace in the blood of the Lamb.

When we have our free hours, we are happy that we are able to meet with our sisters. At ten o'clock we hasten back to our workplaces. Sometimes we live in an attic room or they have arranged a room for us in the basement. We travel an hour or even longer in the streetcar to get back to our places. Often we are a large group of girls who take the same streetcar and so can talk while traveling. Each girl is glad to have spent a nice day, and soon it will be Sunday when we

can go to the Home again.

Whatever our work may be, we are happy that we have the Lord Jesus, and that we can serve Him in this way in a strange place. We are also thankful to our heavenly Father that we have a place we can come to as if it were our own home. May God bless and richly reward all those who make it possible for us to have a home here.

Though I work as a servant
For a meager reward,
Spend my youth in a lowly place
Of a stranger's house and service;
Though nightly my needle
Works my fingers raw,
My heritage and honor is:
"I am a servant of the Lord."
(a paraphrase)

Another girl writes:

When I came from Russia to Saskatchewan and worked for English people on a farm, I felt so lost and lonely, mostly because I missed the fellowship of God's children. Occasionally I heard about the Mary-Martha Home in Winnipeg (at that time there was no City Mission in Saskatchewan) and especially about the blessed devotions there. Since I was getting good wages, I stayed at that place until I had paid my travel debt (immigration) and saved enough money to go to Winnipeg.

The fellowship hours we spent at the Home were roses on a thorny path of service. The thought, "Sunday and Thursday I go to the Home where people care about me," lightened the work in the service greatly, especially for us young homeless girls. Then I went from my place to the Home and just as soon as I saw it from a distance, I involuntarily smiled and walked more quickly in order to lengthen my stay there. As soon as I was happily inside, and in spite of my tiredness, I would have liked to jump for joy and shout "Home at last' and "Hurrah!" But, of course, I caught myself just in time, for I realized this was not proper behavior for grownups.

What we do in the Home is probably known to everyone. We don't make things too easy for our sisters, especially when the time comes for us to return to our places. Then there is a long lineup in front of their doors. There is often something important and private that we want to discuss with the sisters. Newly strengthened, we return to our places. At this point my homesickness for the old country (Russia) recedes because we have a home and fellowship now. Man needs a little place of which he can say, "Here is my home."

Girls Help their Families

Mothers from far away write to their daughters: "If only I could hold you to my heart and kiss you for all that you have done for us. Often you have saved us from death by starvation."

A young girl who became separated from her parents on the journey to Canada came to us. She has become a lovely young woman and has been converted. Her parents write, "You are our Joseph who keeps us alive." Others had to learn that their families did not survive the hardships and died from starvation or other difficulties. Then there was much heartache and tears. No wonder!

Problems

Oh, yes, we had these too, but God's hand daily helped us. There was lack of space, the language problem, the lack of money, sickness - many of the girls suffered from a skin condition at the beginning. The cause was probably the strange lifestyle or even the climate.

A young girl without parents was supposed to accept a job in a household. Time and time again we tried to place her but she wouldn't stay anywhere. She just kept coming back to us. What were we to do? She was young, with no parents and no home. Finally we found a place that we knew was a good home. We had to become firm and stern. It was not easy to treat her like that. "This time you will stay and not come back," we told her. She obeyed and stayed at that place for a number of years.

Parents sent their inexperienced daughter into the Home. Soon she had a job not far from the Home. On the following Sunday, she arrived at the Home, her face disfigured with lipstick and powder. I wanted to laugh when I saw her. I said, "Anna, go immediately and wash your face. You look ridiculous." She obeyed. After a while I heard that she was attending movie theatres with young boys and girls in the neighborhood. What was I to do? She was so easily influenced. She left her job because she did not like it. I was glad, for now she would get away from that company. Anna was a lovely girl in many ways and would surely

find a suitable place. One day a lady came to the Home and introduced herself as Miss Harding. As she made a good impression on me, I let Anna go with her without having discussed details with her. On Thursday, Anna came to the Home and told us that the Hardings had another girl, and the other girl smoked. Worried, for I knew how easily Anna was influenced by others, I telephoned Miss Harding the next day and expressed my concern. She said I should talk to her father about that. Then Archbishop Harding came to the telephone. I was immediately aware that I was speaking to a special personality. He wanted to know my wishes, and I told him I wanted Anna back. I explained that she was there together with another girl who smoked and she would be influenced by such action. Archbishop Harding became very angry. No one had ever insulted his house. They were pleased with Anna and would not let her go.

There was nothing for me to do but pray. A few minutes later the telephone rang. I answered. Archbishop Harding was on the line, requesting that I come down to his house, as he wished to speak to me personally. What now? Could he take me to court for insulting his honor?

On the following Wednesday I went to the Harding house, my heart filled with misgivings. Modestly I went to the back door. Miss Harding answered it and took me to her father's study. A dignified personality stood before me, extending his hand and offering me a chair. We had a long conversation, and I found an understanding and warm friend for our work. Among other things he said, "You are doing your work, but I don't understand why you send out girls in such light, inadequate clothing." I explained that Anna's parents had recently come from Russia and had a large travel debt. Anna was to earn money in order to buy necessities. The Hardings were kind to Anna, and the Home had gained a friend. The Archbishop wanted to have a cup of tea with me, but another visitor came. I excused myself. I had learned something that stood me in good stead later.

If Only We Have Love
(Prose Paraphrase)
Although we walk in weakness,
We are tiny sparks of light.
Each should turn unto the other,
Each should share the other's yoke!
Only with love-consecrated hands
Can the spirit of Jesus be revealed
He who raises us to his glory
If only we have love.

Come with trembling to bear fruit,
Come and sow the seeds of love,
So that He may find the sheaves
When the Lord of harvest nears
Even trifling ears of corn
He can wonderfully transform.
In his light we are one with Him.
If only we have love!

(Gustav Schueller)

It is surely not a matter of chance that the Lord sent our Christian girls into the big cities to serve in the homes of those we would not reach otherwise. Some of these homes did not wish to have repentance and holiness preached to them; therefore the preachers and missionaries turned to the poor who were more approachable. And then our sisters entered the homes of the wealthy, the influential, and the professional people of our country as servants. Their quiet, Christian diligence presented the message of the Cross as powerfully as a sermon. Here are some illustrations. In a refined and wealthy home, Erna relates stories about Jesus to the children in the evening. The children repeat the stories to their parents. Erna is instructed either to stop telling the stories or to leave her service, but the children beg for Erna to stay until the parents relent and Erna may stay and continue telling stories.

In another home, without song or fanfare, Erika bows her head

before meals for quiet grace. The children are curious. What does she see or look for under the table? Her explanation makes such an impression on this family that grace before meals is instituted. The mother of the home has not forgotten that they prayed before meals in her parents's home.

The man of the house is about to return to the office after lunch. He hears his wife telling Lydia, the servant girl, "If somebody calls, tell them I am not at home." Lydia replies, "I will not say that you are not at home, but I will say you are resting." Later, when Lydia leaves the city, these people come to tell me that incident. They requested another girl like Lydia.

Another woman is ill, and she asks Katie to tell her about heaven over and over again, making it difficult for Katie to get her work done.

Another one says, "Lena, I wish I had the sure conviction that you have. You are always so happy even though I know you have to work very hard."

In many homes the girls were tempted by their employers to find out if they were really honest. Sums of money, pearls or rings were put in places where the employer knew the girls would find them while working. This was a depressing situation for the girls. Soon the women learned to know the Mennonite girls and entrusted their children and homes with all their wealth to the girls.

Song: Mary-Martha Home

(Prose Paraphrase)
Praise, honor and worship we bring to you, Lord,
That you have so richly endowed us with your love.
You gave us a home to which we may joyfully come,
To sing and praise you in the circle of our sisters.

Chorus:
O Home, we love you dearly,
O Home, beloved Home,
O Home, you become more dear, dear, dear,

Every year.

As strangers we come to this city,
With longing in our hearts and
With tired and troubled eyes
Our parents in the West at the distant strand,
We now enjoy the fellowship of this Home.

Two days a week we joyfully spend here.
On Sundays and on Thursdays the Lord gives us this time
To pray together, and we ask the Lord's presence
That we may live for him only, and always remain free and holy.

We love our Lord who gave his life for us
To follow him in service until the grave.
Because service for Jesus is our greatest joy,
We are called Tabeas, prepared for any service.

(Written by Sister Anna Redekop, later Mrs. Peter Loewen, of Yarrow, B.C.)

Third row l-r: from number five: Sisters Anna (Neufeld) Rempel; Sarah (Warkentin) Voth; Anna Thiessen; Liese (Unruh) Riesen; Nalja Isaak

4

"*TABEA=VEREIN*" (DORCAS FELLOWSHIP)

Origin

"Now there was in Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36).

In Tabitha we have an example of the modest Christian woman who, with the heart of Mary, sits listening at the feet of Christ and, with the hands of Martha, helps those who suffer by serving. The genuine heart of Tabitha has no room for boredom. The one who is full of good works, the one who fills her time with good works, is protected against evil. Those characteristics, the characteristics of Tabitha, led us to name our fellowship after her.

Sister Margaret Kroeker and her fellow sisters had a modest boarding house on William Avenue in which they became acquainted with many young girls. The sisters befriended the girls, and as early as 1924 they arranged prayer and Bible studies for them on their free days. Other families opened their homes to these girls as well. I recall, especially, the family of Jacob Wedel.

The girls greatly appreciated the love and hospitality they received. But there was still much need for further workers. Thus the missionary sisters considered their responsibility and decided to invite some of the girls to the chapel on Burrows and Andrews on Thursday evenings. In that way, the Mary-Martha Home and the *Tabea Verein* became closely related on those evenings. It was the middle of October, 1925, when eight girls and I joined in a prayer around the big heater in the basement of the chapel. The next Thursday the number had doubled, and so the fellowship group steadily increased until, within two years, we had nearly filled the basement.

On Thursday evenings a large group of girls hurried from the Home to the chapel, or they came from the homes of their friends whom

they had visited during the afternoon. Some walked long distances over Salter Bridge or even from River Heights over Arlington Bridge. They wanted to save streetcar fare, but then soon learned that worn out footwear cost more, and that stopped the long walks.

What was the reason for coming from far and wide, and why did the girls move about so happily in that large circle? First of all, they shared a common burden. Most were separated from their loved ones. In a new and strange land they were lonely. In addition, customs, people and language were unknown. In the Home and the *Verein* they met sympathetic compatriots who helped them with their difficulties. But they also came with hearts longing for food for their immortal souls. I still see them today; how eager they were! It was a delight and a pleasure to meet them and, as far as possible, to lighten their burden. The program of our fellowship hour on Thursday was always filled to capacity. We sang in the German, English and Russian languages. We had to learn both Russian and English from the girls who had just emigrated. Our first English song was "When the Roll is called up Yonder" and the Russian song was "When in Faith and Trust."

Tabea=Verein Work Basket

Our dear mothers have a work basket. In this basket one finds many items to darn, to patch or otherwise to repair. Our Tabitha Fellowship had a large work basket, too. The Lord saw to it that it was always full. We organized the girls into groups, or small committees emerged that had various responsibilities. One group had to prepare the program for each Thursday—one person making opening remarks, others preparing a song or reading a poem. Another group was responsible for making sure to it that the sick, the lonely, the widows and the orphans were visited. Many an old or sick person looked forward to a visit from a *Tabea* representative. A third group was responsible for meeting the new girls, welcoming them and introducing them to the others. We were happy that several of these girls had been teachers in Russia or they had attended private schools for girls. Their expertise was a welcome addition and a great blessing to us. They discussed many valuable themes and

topics with us.

The *Tabea=Blatt* (Tabea Bulletin) was part of our *Tabea* work basket. This bulletin was published by the *Tabea=Verein* from November, 1927 to November 1930. This little bulletin gave us much pleasure. Our capable editor was Sister Liese Neufeld, now Sister Jacob Peters of Kildonan, and Sister Helen Entz, now Sister Ed Horch. Both were working at the *Rundschau* Printshop (now Christian Press) and were permitted to use the press in their free time, making it possible to publish the leaflet. We were thankful to this day for the unselfish service of the sisters.

The girls distributed reading materials by means of this little leaflet. We also had the motto of the *Tabea=Verein* printed. It was presented to every girl, who was expected to memorize it. We also memorized many Bible verses together.

An Alphabetical Motto for the *Tabea Verein*

A - *Always be worshipful in the house of God.*
B - *Attend church and fellowship regularly.*
C - *Christ expects us to be diligent in winning souls.*
D - *Dampen not the Spirit of God.*
E - *Expect the Lord's blessing.*
F - *Joy and service makes you beloved by all.*
G - *Greet all girls who come to the Home and Verein.*
H - *Help out in singing.*
I - *" I am better than she or she." Never let this thought enter your mind.*
J - *Every girl is a jewel to you no matter how different from you she may be. Christ died for her, too.*
K - *Come prayerfully to every fellowship.*
L - *Invite other girls.*
M - *Avoid bad company.*
N - *Take a front seat. Accept responsibility, take initiative.*
O - *Without struggle, no crown.*
P - *Attempt thanksgiving in all situations.*
Q - *Do not worry, tell your worries to the Lord.*

R - *Praise God daily.*

S - *Write to those who cannot come, and visit the girls in your vicinity.*

T - *Perform your duties faithfully.*

U - *Do not omit prayer in your own little room.*

V - *Idle pleasures will not give you love for the hours of fellowship.*

W - *Grow in your faith and remain courageous.*

Z - *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14).*

The Good Portion of Mary

Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." And Jesus answered and said unto her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10: 38-42).

The circumstances of everyday life often gave the Lord Jesus a reason for speaking these important words. Where a Martha, full of care, found cause to be dissatisfied, the Lord spoke words of gentle admonishment. The word the Lord spoke about Mary is one of timeless significance: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Mary's good part consisted in her enjoyment of the fellowship with the Lord Jesus, while Martha was much encumbered with household duties. She listened to the words of Jesus. Do we do likewise? Do we take time to enjoy the fellowship of Jesus and listen to his words, or do we have too much work? Then we, too, must be reminded that "one thing is needful."

No one had directed Mary to sit at Jesus' feet. Like Martha, she should have been concerned about a meal for Jesus and his disciples. But she had a longing for the living word. She sought to still that longing and chose to be "at the feet of Jesus." That is the place so hated by the world.

There she sat quietly and allowed herself to be served by Jesus.

It is natural that we should let Jesus serve us as we listen to his word. So often he cannot satisfy us because we do not possess the necessary quietness and peace of mind. For example, when we have our free time on Thursday and are gathered in the Home or elsewhere, quietness and tranquility are often missing. A poet has stated aptly, "In time of repose I will learn what you have to say to me."

What did Mary gain by listening so quietly at the feet of Jesus? She was criticized by her sister. But that did not trouble Mary, for she knew the Lord was more pleased with her than with the business of Martha. He said, "Mary hath chosen that good part." He paid her tribute and made an additional promise: "It shall not be taken from her." It is a great fortune to have chosen "that good part," for then we have treasure that no one can take from us. While we are busily performing our duties, deep within our heart we want to be like Mary, sitting at the feet of the Master, learning from him to be meek and submissive.

One thing is needful, o Lord, this one thing
Teach me to know;
All else, in spite of appearances,
Is just a heavy yoke;
Whatever wearies and worries the heart
Yet does not genuine pleasure impart.
If I gain this One thing which all else effaces,
In this One alone I can fully delight.

(Sister Katie (Unruh) Redekopp - *Tabea=Blatt*)

Blessings of the *Tabea=Verein* for the Girls

On fellowship evenings, especially when we were visited by ministers of God, a rich repast was prepared for us. At the beginning, Brother C.N. Hiebert, whenever he was home from his travelling ministry, brought us the Bread of Life. As well, Brother P.J. Kornelson, Brother F.F. Isaak, Brother A.B. Peters, and later Brother F.C. Thiessen, served us with informative and richly blessed messages. Through these times of

blessing many girls submitted their lives to the Lord and followed Jesus by way of baptism into the fellowship of the church. Our times of prayer and witness on the first Thursday of every month did not fall short of their intended purpose. The childlike yet powerfully moving testimonies of the girls spoke loudly, inspiring others to seek that peace that passes understanding, and God was gracious, filling them with peace and joy. And so it often happened that we parted renewed in spirit, soul and body.

One *Tabea* member writes:

When I came to Winnipeg at the beginning of November, 1928, I felt myself overwhelmed by great thunder clouds. I experienced difficulties, and I felt that God had hidden his face from me. My lot seemed so hard that I gave up all hope several times. But, thank God, in his everlasting grace there was also mercy to me. I am not worthy of all the love and mercy that he has shown me. Through those experiences I have drawn closer to God. My faith has been tried and strengthened. This has happened not only to me but to many of us here. Therefore we are very grateful and happy that we may meet and share with each other now and then. In us the word is fulfilled: "Be happy with those who are happy and weep with those who weep."

Still another one relates:

On Thursdays we are drawn to the *Verein* where we sing, read and pray and often voluntary recitations are presented. Then we depart, feeling blessed and renewed. I often think how God leads everything so wonderfully and gives us these important days. At work we have various difficulties to overcome. At times when we are depressed, we come to the *Verein* where experiences are related, and it's like a Balm of Gilead for our wounded souls. Often one also comes to the conclusion that one's own problem is not as hard to bear as someone else's. We become thankful and happy that God so loves us that he has made us worthy to suffer and overcome some things. Our hearts become quiet, and in faith we lift up our eyes unto him from whom cometh all help."

A third *Tabea* member writes:

The evenings at the *Verein* are always hours of blessing for us. Many a girl arrives tired, discouraged, in need of comfort and hungry, but she leaves the church refreshed by food from heaven and courageously determined to follow the way he leads—to work and to serve in the strength of the Lord. No less beautiful are the Sundays for the girls. Unfortunately, many are free only every other Sunday, and that free time begins only at three or four o'clock. Then everyone goes to the Mary-Martha Home, where the Sisters conduct the Sunday school lesson. For several years Brother A.B. Peters led us in a study of Acts, with rich blessings. As a result of this Christian fellowship, a good number of girls decided to follow the

narrow road of life.

Sister Mary Doerksen (later Kasper) of India, writes:

I may also say that I learned to appreciate and love the Mary-Martha Home in Winnipeg. For seven years I was privileged to go in and out there, and many a time I was given advice and comfort by the dear sisters. In the Home we found understanding for our practical needs as well as interest and solace for our spiritual life. How often we felt the motherly concern of the sisters for our well-being. They saw to it that we were offered strength for our souls on Thursdays and Sundays.

Many a sorrow and many a worry was prayed and sung away. Of particular significance and value were the lectures presented by Brother A.B. Peters.

It is clear: the Home gave us much. It was, for us, a home, a place of spiritual refreshment, shelter, fellowship and edification. Its significance to us was immeasurable. May it be a blessing to many more to come.

6. Prayer Meetings

Although the social times on Thursday afternoons were good and the fellowship hours on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons even better, the most important work in the long run was the personal ministry. The unspoken longing of the soul expresses itself here and there: "No one is concerned with my soul." Every plant, if it is to grow, must be carefully tended. And so it is with the souls of the young girls. If we want to keep them from heaven, if we want to prevent them from being lost in the turmoil of the big city, we must minister with dedication and love. Oh, how often we wished we could do it better!

As we were aware of our responsibility, we had additional prayer meetings with the sisters of South End, North End, and Kildonan for a number of years. Those meetings were held every first Monday of the month in the homes of the sisters, alternating among three places. A dedicated group of the disciples of Jesus gathered in order to intercede for the large number of young girls working in the city. Our prayer objectives at those meetings were:

1. Preservation and safekeeping of the girls' spirits, souls and bodies.
2. Love for the lost.
3. Conversion of the unsaved girls.

A group of girls on a Sunday afternoon - June, 1938. Sister Lena Isaak stands in the middle in the doorway

4. Wisdom and grace from above to find the right approach to the different personalities of the girls.

5. God's blessing on the families who had taken the girls into their care.

6. Financial support and blessing for the girls's residences.

7. That every girl by way of her quiet and devout walk in life might be a witness for Jesus.

The facts show that God revealed himself in his work. Among many others, the girls's residences were evidence of God's care and answer to prayer. One of the prayer partners, Katie Fast, writes the following: "Those of us who work in these institutions have many an insight into the battles and joys of the girls working in the homes. Many spiritual and practical needs were brought before the throne of grace, many a 'pray for me' was given as a farewell request."

Those last requests were the reason that a group of women expressed willingness to remember all the working girls in daily prayer. Their prayer was based on Matthew 18:19-20. "Again I say unto you, 'That if two shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' "

Here the daughters of our people who, far away from their parents, must work under a strange roof, were continually placed in the care of Jesus with their needs, concerns and joys. All the girls were remembered - those who had already committed their lives to Jesus as well as those who were not his but were seeking him and those who had so far refused him. Mission stations in heathen lands and at home, their leaders and assistants,—all were remembered in constant prayer.

Guidelines at these prayer meetings came first of all from God's Word and then also from edifying articles such as "Nurturing our Own Souls" and "How to Win Souls." The hours of prayer were times of blessing, and we were happy to know that we were coworkers in the work of the Lord.

Brother Peters with several of the Bible students

United Festival on College Avenue, 1934

In the basement during the meal. In the background at left: Sister Helena Epp, supervisor of the Ebenezer Home of the Schoenwieser Church. At right, Anna Thiessen.

Bible School

When asked to consider attending Bible school, the girls encountered many obstacles. How could they be in full service and still find time to attend a Bible school? Home, chapel and place of work were widely separated. They had only one Thursday free, and not all the girls wanted to study. But the girls took the matter seriously, and something was actually accomplished. That reminds us of Psalm 84:6: "Who passing through the valley of Baca [desolation], make it a well." The girls with a zest for learning went to Brother A.B. Peters and Brother F.C. Thiessen. The brethren were willing to offer the girls a systematic Bible course from six to eight o'clock in the evenings at the North End Church. Special arrangements were made to use one of the Sunday school classrooms, and the instruction and learning began. It was a joy to the girls, for they loved the Word of God and their instructors.

The *Tabea=Verein* met at eight o'clock in the sanctuary of the same church. Thus it was possible to have the Bible school course and the *Tabea* meeting at the same time. At eight o'clock, Brother Peters presented lectures on the Bible. These lectures were framed by additional songs and recitations by *Tabea* members, and thereupon Brother Thiessen continued his instruction. As tired "Marthas", the girls came to the Home to do service for *Tabea=Verein*, but in order to gain spiritual renewal, like Mary, they sat at the feet of Jesus to listen and learn.

Festivals

Our Thursdays, which were always richly filled days, will be long remembered. Special festivities became highlights of our story. The young girls had a desire for social life, but the Word of God shared by one of the preacher brethren was also part of every celebration.

Reunions

Since South End and Kildonan had been organized as separate churches, and we all lived so widely separated, each church formed its

own clubs. At the South End the Mission Circle and the Girls Choir were organized; in North Kildonan the Mission Society and *"Veilchenbund"* (Band of Violets); and at the North End the Fellowship of Willing Helpers. In addition there was the Ebenezer Girls' Home and the Edelweiss Circle of the Schoenwieser Church on Alexander Avenue. We of the *Tabea=Verein* wished to get to know the others in the Ebenezer Home and all the other groups. Our Chapel on College Avenue was finished, and so we invited all the clubs and associations to a celebration. We called it the "Assembly Festival" because we were uniting to praise him who is wonderful to all his children. It was our privilege to have our celebration in April before some of the girls went home for the summer months. We continued annually to hold a celebration for eleven consecutive years in four different locations: Schoenwieser, North Kildonan, South End and North End Churches.

The leaders of the various clubs and homes met to set up a program. We started with a part of the celebration at half past four, and at six we went into the basement, where the hosts had prepared a meal. In the evening we had the climax of the celebration. The sermons of the preachers were unforgettable as were the beautiful and suitable songs by the various participating groups. One could not help but be overcome with mixed emotions, as the evening progressed, at the sight of the large congregation of girls. May those girls, many of whom are mothers now, remember those meetings in their hearts. These assembly celebrations were also designed to strengthen and encourage each other.

Elder Klassen composed a poem for one of our united celebrations based on Exodus 15: 27: "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." Just as Elim was an oasis in the desert for the children of Israel, our homes were a place of rest and sweet water for the girls. We were sometimes pleasantly surprised at our celebration gatherings. In one place we were presented with flowers, in another with a remembrance of the Ebenezer Home. In Kildonan we were given the following reading:

Tabea **members in sanctuary of North End Church**

The Meaning of a Greeting

(abridged)

A greeting is the easiest, gentlest, and most spiritual contact that exists among people. It lasts but a few moments, yet it may contain a wealth of feeling.

To greet sincerely is a noble gift of God. There are people who salute you so that a beautiful day becomes more beautiful, and a grey day is gilded with light. Such a greeting sends you on your way rejoicing.

Gruess Gott! - What a greeting of Love!

When we hear this from a stranger in a foreign land, we feel welcome even in a strange country.

(from "Aus Herz und Haus")

Mother's Day

Weeks before Mother's Day the girls were busy making carnations out of red and white paper, for we could not afford real flowers. We celebrated Mother's Day evening in the company of the mothers in our home congregation.

Mother's Day reminds us of our childhood and home. It inspires us to do something for Mother, even if she has already preceded us into our heavenly home. To know that Mother or Father is waiting for us in eternity comforts us. J.A. Bengel states, "When the heavenly portal is opened for the entrance of a pilgrim, a breath of heaven touches all to whom the pilgrim was near and dear. This strengthens and comforts them until it is their turn." Unfortunately, not all girls knew if father, mother, or in most cases, both parents were living, or perhaps living under difficult circumstances in faraway dark Russia.

Perhaps at no time were emotions as taxed as on Mother's Day, and yet many wished to have a program on that evening. It was difficult to get the girls together, for the realization that they had no home and no parents any longer overwhelmed many girls so much that they did not want to come. I was deeply moved when I stood before the girls and saw the many white flowers. I noted their sadness as they picked and fastened their flower. One incident is particularly poignant. I thought all the girls had left the hall, but when I looked again I saw one girl standing alone. I

went to her and she put her arms around me, weeping bitterly. She had lost her parents while still a small child, at the hands of murdering bands in Russia. And now, as she was growing older, she felt the loss more than ever.

Treue Mutterhaende
(Faithful Hands of a Mother)

Koennt ich noch einmal deine Haende halten,
Geliebte Mutter mein,
Die Haende, die im schlichten, treuen Walten
Gesorgt fuer gross und klein.

Was deine Haende schufen, ward zum Segen
Fuer deine Kinderschar
Und fuer den Gatten, den du allerwegen
Geliebt unwandelbar.

O, deine Haende glichen deiner Seele,
Die stark and doch so fein,
Und deinem Mund, des Rede ohne Fehle
So herb wie mild und fein!

Nun kann ich deine Haende nicht mehr halten,
Doch wirkt dein Geist noch fort.
In deinem Kinde wird sich neu gestalten
Dein Tun, dein Sinn, dein Wort!

(Ida Neubert)

Birthday Celebrations

In my parental home the birthdays of the children were always noted. Not that there was a party or that visitors came—no, a kiss and good wishes from Father and Mother was the sign of their love. Even after I grew up and left home, I was not forgotten. For my birthday I always received an extra letter from my parents. This practise continued

until they had completed their earthly journey and entered into eternal rest. Mother's last word for my birthday was, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Hebrews 10:35). Perhaps that special attention has influenced my emphasis on the birthdays of the many homeless girls with whom I was privileged to work in my field of service.

In the earliest years we celebrated the birthdays of the girls on the Last Saturday of every third month. Naturally, only the girls having a birthday in that timespan were invited. However, girls were often away during the summer months, and they did not wish to miss their day. In order to do justice to all, we had to find another way. When our new chapel was finished, we invited all girls there for the middle of September. Most girls were back from their homes or from the beach, where they had gone with their employers, and girls leaving for winter Bible schools were still in Winnipeg and could participate.

We set up twelve tables in the basement, and decorated each according to the month and season. The months of spring were lavish with flowers, the summer and fall tables profuse with fruits of all kinds. The winter tables were white with snow and icicles—cotton batting and artificial ice. Girls who had birthdays in December made sure they had a little Christmas tree. And all tables were richly laden with cakes and pastries; the mistresses wanted to help make their girls's birthdays as nice as possible. The women came to look at the lovely tables.

To this happy celebration we invited parents: we invited a set of "parents" for each table who wished each "daughter" happiness and blessings. Also, each table had to contribute a song, a recitation, a poem or a play. The girls participated enthusiastically.

Christmas with Tabea=Verein

Christmas was one of the most important celebrations at the Mary-Martha Home and the *Tabea=Verein*. Streets and roofs were usually under a cover of soft white snow sparkling in the sunlight of the street lamps by night. Hoarfrost covered trees and telephone wires. This beauty in nature was a harbinger of Christmas, and with great joy and expecta-

Jubilee, 1950. The Sisters Anna and Martha Thiessen with the singers

tion the girls looked forward to the celebration.

Jesus has come to save us from the curse of sin, and this fact should give us daily joy, not only at Christmas. "True," said the girls, "but with my modest income I cannot buy my mother new material for a dress every day, nor a pair of warm woolen socks for my father, nor a new doll for my little sister. But at Christmas I can do these things and, more than that, I can go home to see all my loved ones. And that makes me so happy."

Alas, there was always a group who could not go home for Christmas. They did not have the money to travel, or they did not have parents and a home, or they did not have permission from their employers to take time off. So we were sometimes depressed in spirit, but the Lord gave the girls grace to overcome such feelings, and they rejoiced with those rejoicing.

On a Thursday shortly before Christmas, we presented a program to our congregation and our friends. We began practising weeks before the event. The program consisted of the beautiful, never-aging carols, dialogues, recitations of poetry and a sermon by one of the ministers. Sometimes the girls related experiences from their own Christmas past.

In the beginning years, we did not have the means to entertain the large number of girls at a Christmas dinner. Then under the leadership of Sister C.A. DeFehr, the Ladies Aid group suggested that we should provide a program and the ladies would make a Christmas dinner. That was both a happy and a comforting idea. The sisters were able to get turkeys from farms outside the city, and they set about cooking and roasting and baking. It was never easy to transport everything to the church and to make the preparation for a group of more than a hundred girls, but love always found a way.

These were always joyful and blessed evenings. The sisters of the Ladies Aid did their work with real heartfelt love for us. You should have seen the girls and the ladies! I observed how these mothers embraced one, two and three of the girls and kissed them. I also saw how the girls approached the ladies with open arms and thanked them for the Christmas meal.

We always had a Christmas tree at this celebration, and when the candles were lit, we placed the little gifts we had bought for each other underneath the tree. When the formal part of the festivities was over and the guests had left, we opened the gifts. Everywhere one saw happy faces and shining eyes as we wished each other a merry Christmas. Then, in the cold, dark night, they departed to their places of work, but with a deep peace and joy in their hearts. And with that peace they were able to be quiet and submissive in their environment so that the entire household where they worked sensed their peace.

The sisters of the Ladies Aid prepared Christmas dinners for us for several years, and thereby gave us much joy. And the time came when, with the help of the girls, we could do it at the Home.

Time and circumstances change, and so it is with our story. For a time we had invited the congregation to our festivities, but then we wanted to celebrate amongst ourselves, inviting no guests. Good! Brother and Sister C.A. DeFehr came only at the close of the festivity. Brother DeFehr had a short message for the assembly. We were secretly pleased that we would probably hear a guitar solo, since he carried a guitar. But, what a surprise! In order to add to our pleasure, he and his wife presented

A group of girls with guitars

the guitar as a gift to the home. Several of our girls were able to play, but none was able to buy her own. After that, the girls played the guitar often, thus enhancing the musical part of our evenings.

The generosity of the DeFehrs did not end with one guitar. In the following years they brought us a big box of apples, a tasty ham, an enormous turkey or some other generous gift. These gifts were always received with smiling faces. As a group we were also invited to the DeFehrs's lovely home in order to enjoy their unselfish hospitality. Christmas (1937) brought another unusual surprise. On December 24 we received a big parcel from the sisters of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas. Since the girls's attendance at the Home was very irregular during the Christmas holidays, we left the opening of the package until a later, more suitable time. When we finally opened it, more than seventy girls were delighted by the gifts. It was a pleasure to see them with their opened gifts. One exclaimed, "I just needed a pair of gloves," and another, "And I a collar," while another said, "Look at this lovely scarf!" and so on.

Further surprises came to us through the girls who no longer required the Home. Either the Lord had given them their own home or their parents had moved into the city and they were able to spend their leisure time in the circle of their family. Many of these were *Tabea* members, and they did not forget the Home and the girls but rather went out of their way to give us pleasure. For example, one girl had little cards printed, designed with a spray of evergreen and a lighted candle, and hearing the following words:

Although the candle lights have dimmed,
And Christmas joys are gone,
A quiet voice within reminds us -
We are not alone.

Jubilee Festivities

The preceding celebrations could take place every year, and it was always a highlight to gather as a family. Some other memorable occasions are worth recording.

i. In 1935 we celebrated our tenth anniversary and on that occasion I

was pleasantly surprised with several poems, including the following (brief summary):

> For ten years, Sister Anna, you and this house were our "home" and the Lord will reward you for your loyal and quiet service. The Lord built this house and entrusted its use to the original eight girls. He let it prosper and grow to the large group of today. You gathered the girls like a flock of doves about you and shielded them from harm and prayed for them. Your prayers were answered, even if it was not always visible. Many blessings continued to flow year after year until we grew to this large gathering. Although you sometimes seemed stern and had to bear much pain because of our thoughtlessness, we thank you. We thank God for this period that he has allowed us experience with you, and ask him from the depth of our hearts to be with you. Ten years of travail, worry, and sorrow and joy you have shared with us. May God, in the richness of his Grace bless you and reward you further on life's journey.

(Written by a sister in Niverville, Manitoba, and presented by Sister Margaret (Janzen) Regehr.)

ii. On 22 October, 1950, we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Mary-Martha Home. This was a very special occurrence for all the girls. The Thanksgiving service, to the glory of God, was opened with song and prayer by Brother H.P. Toews, chairman of the City Mission. During the afternoon and evening services, twenty-five years of the wondrous leading of the Lord were presented to us, including a sermon by Brother W. Falk, songs, recitations and a dialogue, "It came from God," written by Sister Jacob Peters of North Kildonan.

During the intermission, the "Marthas" served a meal. Many used this opportunity to greet the "Marys", "Marthas" and *"Tabeas"* who had come from far and near to attend the joyous occasion.

At the evening service, several telegrams were read. Following several short items Brother Isaac Redekopp of Kildonan spoke to us on the theme"The Mary-Martha Home in the Light of the Bible" (Luke 10:38-42; John 11: 5; John 12:1-11.)

Brother Redekopp skillfully utilized anecdotes and scripture to describe our home. He made the following points:

1. It was a home not free from human weaknesses;
2. It was a home exposed to public criticism;
3. It spread the awareness of eternity;
4. It was a home where the power of rebirth became known.

An offering was taken on that occasion which amounted to $200.

It was donated to the Home.

We are happy and grateful that we were privileged to celebrate in the midst of so many girls and friends. In looking back over twenty-five years, we could see so much evidence for thanksgiving and praise to God. We will not forget his many blessings on our home and the *Tabea=Verein*. The efforts of God's loyal children and messengers were not in vain. Not only did we thank him but also we bend our knees in rededication to his service and humbly asked his blessing and nearness in the coming years.

Co-workers

Hundreds of girls and women have passed in and out through the doors of the Mary-Martha Home. They came from near and far. Their needs were modest, and we had the privilege of giving them a helping hand.

A chain of co-workers developed around this band of girls. They were like a strong wall and therefore deserve to be named. Without their help we could not have coped with the work. Some have been named during the course of this report. Unfortunately I cannot name all of those who came and went, but I will name those who stayed the longest, and who despite their hard jobs, were willing to help out on Thursdays and Sundays.

The sister Helen (Janz) Thiessen of B.C., Mary (Bartsch) Reimer of B.C., Mary Petkau of B.C., Mariechen Redekopp of Winnipeg, alternately led the Sunday school classes on Sunday afternoons until Brother A.B. Peter came and led the Bible studies.

The following sisters held various offices in the *Tabea=Verein*: Sister Isbrand Riesen of Yarrow, B.C.; Sister H.S. Rempel of Saskatoon; Sister Abraham Regier of Steinbach, Manitoba; Sister Susie Voth of Vancouver; and the sisters Margaret Unruh, Esther Horch, Mary and Anne Warkentin, Anne Penner, Sarah Reimer, Betty Enns and Nalja Isaak, all of Winnipeg. The last named accompanied the singing in the *Tabea=Verein* on the piano every Thursday for twenty-seven years. At meetings where we have one group of girls on one Thursday and another

on the next, the singing requires piano accompaniment, and it was therefore a great service that Nalja always had time for us.

Girls who lived in the Home also helped us in their free time: Sister Lena Rempel, now Mrs. Froese of Abbotsford, B.C., would ask as soon as she came in from work, "Sister Anna, do you have a job for me?" And it seemed there was always a job to do. It might be to meet and bring home a girl from the CP Railway Station, or another time someone would be waiting at the Bus Depot. As well, many girls had to be taken to their places of work, and in some cases had to be fetched if they spoke no English. It seemed that Sister Lena never tired.

Serving with love just seems to say:
"Lo, I am the Lord's handmaiden today!"
Thankful that she may do his will
In every service, joyful and still.
Often forgetting her personal needs
As others she helps and holds and leads.
She seeks the suffering and the sad,
Remembering always the promise of God:
A humble servant, though here reviled,
In God's Kingdom she is his child.

(M. Feesche)

Sisters Employed in the Home:

When the work with the girls began, and I was, nevertheless, not to neglect my work in the City Mission, Sister Mary Klassen (now Mrs. Jacob Wiens) came to help me. Unfortunately she had to leave because of ill health. She was followed by Sister Katie Guenther, who also left, one-and-a-half years later, to marry Brother Abram Neufeld (now in B.C.). Later, Lena Isaak (now Sawatsky) came, and at present, Sister Tina Friesen is working here. In addition, the sisters Mary Klassen, of Winkler (now Kildonan), and Lena Bargen helped in the work on a temporary basis.

During the beginning years I visited the hospital every week, and there I met a widow, Helena Goosen. Homeless and without support in a strange land, she repeatedly pleaded,"Take me with you." She finally per-

suaded me to take her to the Home. For eleven years she helped us when her health permitted it; when she was ill, we took care of her. We were grateful to give her a home until the Lord Jesus came to release her from the many trials of body and spirit and take her to his eternal home.

Sisters Appointed by the Conference:

First there was Sister Warkentin of Winkler. However, before very long, Brother Voth of Minnesota, came and married her. Then Sister Liese Unruh of Steinbach came, and for three years we shared the work among the girls. She left the Home because of lack of funds but continued to support us morally. She also helped with the *Tabea=Verein* until she married Brother Isbrand Riesen of Yarrow, B.C., and became the capable house mother of the Old Folks Home there. Both sisters gave valuable service to the Home.

When my strength began to lessen a few years ago, my sister

Sister Martha (Thiessen) Schulz, 1947-1951

Martha came and capably directed the Home and the *Tabea=Verein* until she married Brother D.D. Schulz of Herbert, Saskatchewan. Later appointments involved the sisters Betty Enns of Winnipeg; Anne Thiessen of Alberta; and Elsie Falk of B.C. Unfortunately, they found the work either too hard or their interests to lie in another field, and so left us. Nevertheless, they made contributions to the improvement and attractiveness of the Home.

We are approaching our thirtieth anniversary of the Mary-Martha Home, and Sister Katie Fast, of Winnipeg, will assume the direction of the Home. She is familiar with the Home, having come to Winnipeg in 1926. She came to the Home regularly until her mother and sisters moved to the city. She assisted in many ways and especially at the personal prayer sessions. We hope to continue this work with God's help.

"Last, but not least" closes the chain of the many helpers with the mention of our preacher brethren who served us so faithfully with the everflowing spring of the spiritual word: Brother C.N. Hiebert, Brother P.J. Kornelson, Brother F.F. Isaak, Brother A.B. Peters, Brother F.C. Thiessen, Brother B.B. Fast, Brother W. Falk, and in recent years, Brother D.K. Duerksen and Brother H. Regehr. In all these times we felt the nearness of the Lord. He will bless every service in eternity.

How was the Home Financially Supported?

By the Conference

The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Canada supported me so that I could do this work. The Conference paid me, in addition to my salary, $20 per month for the rent. After we bought the house, this amount was increased to $25 to make the payments. The Committee was always concerned about us, and we always felt the goodwill of the Conference for our wellbeing.

By the Girls:

From the beginning, the girls themselves contributed the most of the support for the Home. First, it was those who lived here and paid

their rent. But those were few because the Home had to have space for the girls who were looking for work. The *Tabea=Verein* looked after mission actions. Articles were made for sale. We looked after a mission program and invited our congregation to one or sometimes two auctions a year. The money raised by these auctions were used in the operation of the Home. Later, some of the money was also donated to missions, at home and abroad.

Wages at the beginning were very low, and with the onset of the Depression, making ends meet was very difficult. There was almost always a number of girls and single women who were not in a position to pay rent: either they were ill or they had to wait for a job. Some stayed at the Home for months before they found a place where they could stay. Again and again we experienced the care of God. Daily his manifestations of grace spoke to us through Psalm 146:9: "The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and the widows." Often we felt like the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings: we had enough for each day if we could not see the future.

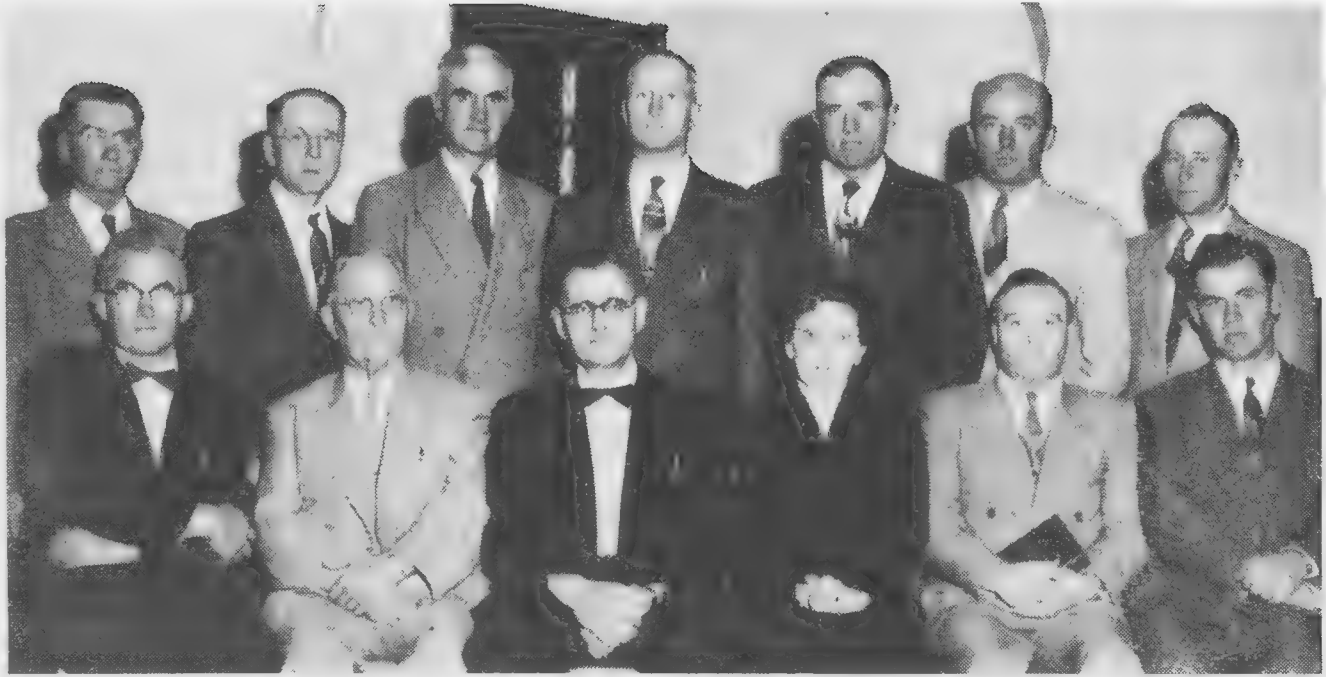
By Donations:

In his many travels throughout the United States, Brother C.N. Hiebert related incidents about our girls and the Home. Clothing was donated and distributed at the Hiebert home. We received blankets, pillows, sheets, and other useful items. Brother G.G. Doerksen, Treasurer for the City Mission in Borden, Saskatchewan, procured meat and supplies during the winter. The congregation in Winkler sent vegetables. When the Winnipeg congregation grew, and women's groups were organized, Sister C. DeFehr arranged "Mary-Martha Home Days" for gifts and donations. The congregations of South End and Kildonan participated generously in these contributions. These friends gave practical as well as valuable items such as dishes, linen, and groceries. Frequently someone brought a sack of flour, and from somewhere else came a sack of sugar. In fact, on one occasion a big truck loaded with firewood entered the yard. We almost sent him away! The Kildonan group has kept us supplied with vegetables to this day. Brother Langemann, in spite of

his old age, always came along when a truckload of vegetables was being delivered and helped carry the produce into the basement. When I met him last year, he gave me his trembling hand, saying, "It was always a pleasure for me; now I can't do it any more."

When we needed money in 1943 for the renovation of the House, some brethren supplied transportation so that a group of girls could visit surrounding congregations, present a program, and thus raise funds to cover our outlay. In this way, our last debts were paid. Since then the Home is debt free. No more looking for a house, no more moving, no more interest payments!

And today? The debts are long paid off and forgotten. Wages are higher. The rooms are always taken since the girls don't have to wait as long for jobs. The Mary-Martha Home has become self-supporting. To God be the glory!



The present Committee of the City Mission. Sitting l-r: Brother Wm. Falk, Secretary; Brother C.A. DeFehr, Treasurer; Brother J. P. Neufeld, Chairman; Sister Katie Fast, Director of the Mary-Martha Home; Brother J. M. Schmidt, City Missionary for Winnipeg; Brother Abram Froese, City Missionary for Brandon; Standing l-4: Brother A. H. Voth, Morden; Brother A. Peters, Boissevain; Brother Johann Funk, Elm Creek; Brother Henry A. Regehr, Steinbach; Brother J. J. Kroeker, Brandon; Brother D. Dyck, Newton Siding; Brother A. A. Hyde, Kronsgart

5.

MISSION AMONG OTHER NATIONALITIES

The Reason for This Mission

Why go afar where the palm trees sway,
When at our doors souls slip away?
Here, where the light of the Bible long has shone,
Idol worship is still being carried on.

Yes, here where so much has been done among our own people, there still remained a wide field, an empty, unconquered land where the Lord was unknown. This fact moved the Committee of the City Mission to bring the gospel to people of other nationalities who lived in Winnipeg. Under the chairmanship of Brother H.P. Toews, the Committee held many meetings and wrestled with God to find the right beginning for this important work. The transition period is described in Brother W. Falk's report:

The Transition Period of the City Mission Toward Extension Work Among Various Nationalities (by W. Falk)

As each work in God's Kingdom begins in a small way, the story of the Winnipeg City Mission likewise started inconspicuously. But the promise of our gracious God, "I have many people in this city," was also fulfilled in this Mission. The faithful work of his servants was blessed with growth and expansion, and after twenty-five years of Mission work, three Brethren congregations, self-sufficient and self-directing, had come into being. Each congregation had its own preaching brethren, Sunday school teacher and choirs. The Lord now laid a burden on the hearts of his children and moved the Mennonite Brethren Conference to search for these human souls who did not attend a church, whose children did not go to Sunday school, who were fallen and criminal, who were shunned and cast off by society. So the Conference freed the city missionary from the responsibility of ministering to the congregation in order to go to the various nationalities.

Thus the Mission work among the unchurched was born. Without an exact plan or program, without prescribed situations or opportunities, the city missionary stood before a living sea of human souls, all loved by the Lord, all of

whom the Lord wanted to save. And even in that hour of a new beginning and a great turning point in the history of the Mennonite Brethren City Mission came Jesus's words of encouragement: 'Do not be afraid..for I have many people in this city.' He guided the first steps to the lonely and sick who were in the many hospitals, old folks homes and convalescent institutions. There was a wide, open field where a friendly visit and a comforting word became rays of hope that illuminated the soul through the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another and even larger field opened up for the City Mission to the children. Sunday schools were opened on weekday evenings in private homes, churches, halls or other places. Soon 270 - 350 children gathered in various places, coming from English, French, Ukrainian, German, Jewish, Indian and Black backgrounds. Children and their families were embraced by the message of the Cross. Many doors were opened by the Lord of the harvest. Meetings were held with drunkards, criminals and the downfallen. In the Union Gospel Mission, in convalescent homes, at the Institute for the Blind; in fact, even in Catholic institutions we were permitted to serve with songs and Bible messages.

In the large railway shops and work areas we were permitted to hold a short worship service during the noon hour, which was attended by many railway workers. Likewise the steel doors of the provincial jail at Headingley were opened by the Lord, and for two-and-a-half years we were able to serve the inmates there once a month with male voice singing and the gospel message.

Soon the Mennonite Brethren Conference was convinced that it had understood the Lord clearly and correctly in this new direction of the mission work. How they thanked the Lord when his grace manifested itself again and again among the many different people! There was unspeakable joy in the hearts of the faithful when the saving power of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ raised those who had fallen so miserably low in sin. When a convict brokenheartedly confessed his sordid life's story after a gospel message, he accepted his many years of prison sentence with repentance and submission. With tears he believed the joyful certainty of the words, "I have found grace and forgiveness with God through the blood of Jesus Christ." This was fruit of the work.

Mission work among the nations! "God, we thank you today for his commission. We bless the brethren who guided this work. We thank all the workers through whose faithful efforts it was done. We pray for blessing, continuation and expansion until the coming of our Lord, Master and King, who will gather from all nations, peoples, languages and tongues those whose names were written in the Book of Life."

How We Reached Out to the People

Brother W. Falk put much energy into the children's assemblies.

In various areas of our big city the doors of private homes, small halls and rented rooms rented by the Mission were opened to him. During the winter there were about fifteen Mission Sunday schools per week. Some children were picked up by Brother Falk in his car. When he would arrive at a public school on a Wednesday after classes, a circle of children would gather around his car asking, "Is this the Wednesday Sunday school car?" Immediately upon his positive response, the doors were opened and in jumped and pushed ten, twelve, fourteen, sometimes as many as eighteen children! There was hardly room to breathe in the car. That was a joy! Not only was it a joy for the children and the workers but also for those who were willing to open their homes for the classes. In addition to those worship services for children in the various locations, weekly children's assemblies were held in the North End Church.

The aim of the Conference was to reach out to the people who did not attend any church services. Brother Falk spared no effort to gather and serve just such people, despite of the fact that he had no adequate space. He went to the work areas of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railroads and asked for permission to have noonday assemblies with the hundreds of people who worked there. This was granted and Brother Falk, with the assistance of a quartet, began holding services and handing out tracts. This was possible because the City Mission put a car at the men's disposal and they were willing to give up their noonhour to serve with singing.

Various other meetings were held. We accompanied Brother Falk on some of his mission outreaches. First of all we concentrated on the Main Street area near the Canadian Pacific Railway station. The traffic was loud and unpleasant there. Not only that but also one could find a pool room, a beer parlor and other disreputable establishments there. Poor, lost people, mostly men, stood around the street corners and lanes. In the midst of it all was the Union Gospel Mission. Some years ago, a man of faith set up missions such as this, not only in Winnipeg, but in many big cities.

We would go in and sit among the unfortunate people. Here one tried to acquaint the people with the precious gospel that can wash away

all sins. During the worship service some sisters prepared refreshments to serve the bodily needs of these people, which action also gave the opportunity for spiritual witness. When spirits were depressed and hearts bled because of the indifference of the people, we repeatedly experienced the uplifting power of the gospel. The City Mission has continued this ministry without interruption for sixteen years.

Early one morning we drove out to Headingley Jail. From a fairly high platform in a large hall we faced the seated convicts, surrounded by armed guards. Brother Falk led in the singing, and it was amazing to hear how energetically the men joined in the singing. Most of them were well aware of their guilt, and one wondered if one or another, on being released, would not resolve to become a new person. I assumed as much, for the word of the Cross can work miracles.

For some years we also had a City Transit Mission where thousands of people had a daily opportunity to read God's Word in Bible verse placards placed in 150 streetcars. Bible tracts were also handed out to passengers.

City Mission Church

The city missionary had worked for some years without a definite place of worship. Finally the Lord answered the prayers of the workers and the City Mission Committee. In the fall of 1949, we were able to buy a chapel on Logan Avenue from the Swedish Baptist congregation. The purchase also included a little house next door for the caretaker. The North End Congregation (now Elmwood) purchased the Conference church they were using from the Canadian Conference. The Manitoba Conference received half the money since this money had originally been designed for a mission house. The city missionary thus gained a place of worship where he could win souls he would not be able to reach otherwise.

The Chapel is situated in the heart of the city, where many poor people and many children live. This is a God-given opportunity to win them for God's kingdom. If we have won the children, we also have the parents. The Chapel is named The Gospel Light Mission. The light of the

gospel, the word of the Cross, shall be spread in the darkest part of the city by the workers and by those who have been won for the Lord. Our Lord said, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, 'Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.' And the Lord said unto the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled' " (Luke 14: 21-23).

It had become a fact: the church had been purchased. This was a very special occasion in the history of our City Mission. Obviously some renovations needed to be made, but we would cope with them. The Mission workers were deeply aware of their responsibility. Some anxious questions were raised: "Will the children and the people come to our services?" "What expectations does this area present?" But with the guidance of him who gave his life for us, Brother Falk and his fellow workers joyfully began with a Sunday school on Sunday afternoons and worship services on Sunday evenings. They were aware of God's promise in Isaiah 55: 10-11:

> For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth down the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

It was naturally not so easy to reach those whom we wanted to reach, but the workers went into the streets and lanes, inviting the children and adults: "Come to Logan Mission to hear the word of the Cross. Come, you who walk in darkness, and listen to the beautiful songs. come and be saved." There were many opportunities to witness, to love, and to serve. The Lord armed his workers with courage, energy and joy of faith. It was not in vain. Although only a few came at the beginning, it did not take long before we had a Sunday school of eighty-three children in six classes. The children's mission was a greatly strengthened by the union of the South End Mission Sunday school and the Sunday school of the Logan Mission.

The Gospel Light Mission, 406 Logan Avenue

Further Branches of the Mission Work

On Saturday afternoons boys and girls gathered for crafts and a children's worship service. About forty-five children came to make things from wood, leather and other materials. We also were given permission to take some of them to Mission Camp. Some children accepted the Lord as their Savior. What a joy for the workers and for those who made it possible for children to come under Christian teaching!

The work among other peoples and nations expanded greatly at this time. Sunday schools started, the gospel of the Cross for the fallen was preached at Union Gospel Mission, visitations with short sermons were made at Bethania and Middlechurch Old Folks Homes. Visits were made in Headingley Jail, Stony Mountain Penitentiary, the Institute for

the Blind, and in various hospitals including mental institutions and sanatoriums. In a special way doors were opened to those living alone, the sick, the old and lonely, and those who lived scattered in the big city. Many a despairing and despondent heart was comforted in this way. With many, a critical battle for their soul's salvation was engaged. This was a one-to-one work requiring humanity, compassion, sympathetic listening to a deeply-fallen person and awareness of the cry of a despairing soul. Therefore this work was much more difficult than preaching before a large congregation. And that was why workers had many sleepless nights.

Another important branch of the City Mission since 1951 was the Sunday morning radio broadcast in German. At first the programs were aired over CKY, and when that was no longer possible, other doors were opened so that the precious message was aired by four stations from Jamestown, Saskatoon, Wasco and Minto. At present the morning service is being broadcast from CKOM, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In this way people who cannot attend church or who do not understand English receive the Word of God. Some listen because they want to hear the word in German. God has richly blessed this work as shown by the many letters received by Brother Falk.

Change of Workers

Brother and Sister W. Falk, who had done the work of the City Mission for a number of years and had expanded it to include other nationalities, left the field of the city missionary service in the Conference year 1952. God had richly blessed their work, and the City Mission field continued. (Brother Falk is now pastor of the North Kildonan Congregation and is also active in the German Sunday morning radio work.) God's kingdom must be built, for the saving of souls is very important. God's Word commands, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). When Brother and Sister Falk withdrew from active service, Brother and Sister John M. Schmidt, who had graduated from the Bible College here, came from Coaldale, Alberta, to take over the work of the City Mission. Brother Schmidt is familiar to many through his radio work at the

"Gospel Light Hour."

Brother and Sister Schmidt accepted the work with new vigour and continued with the various branches of the Mission. In personal encounters they became familiar with the tragic condition of a spiritually lost and weakened people. Deeply moved, Brother Schmidt quoted Matthew 9: 35-36:

> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

The Lord be praised and thanked that these poor people once again had a shepherd and a pastor who cared for them and sought to win them for the Kingdom of God.

Excerpts from Brother Schmidt's Conference Report, 1955

Jesus answering said unto them, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke 7:22). What the Lord did for the unfortunate in his time, we try to do in his name and his power. We count it a great privilege to preach the gospel to the many poor, lame, leprous, deaf and dead of our city and show them the way of salvation. The Lord has done great things for us; for that we are glad and give him the glory. I would also like to point out to our Conference that we have a great number of missionaries in Winnipeg who actively help in the work. If I should enumerate all the Sunday school workers, singers, drivers, the personal workers and the brethren who preach the Word, the list would comprise around three hundred persons. To God and these treasured workers we owe our thanks.

In the Logan Mission we have a Sunday school of 130 to 150 children who attend regularly every Sunday. We have over 200 of them registered. Brother Walter Janzen serves as superintendent and Brother Poetker leads the singing. As to the other teachers, they are doing an invaluable service for the children who live in the slums of the city. We must not forget the brethren who tirelessly give their cars to pick up and drive the children to and from Sunday school. Generous donations also made it possible to send fifty of these disadvantaged children to a Christian camp for ten days.

The Sunday morning worship services were relatively well attended. We were also able to begin a second Sunday school where we have classes for adults

In basement of the Logan Avenue Mission. Two girls from the Mary-Martha Home are serving cocoa. Left: Betty Friesen; right: Dorothy Schroeder

and for children who attended on Sunday mornings. The evening services are well attended and have been a great blessing for Christians and non-Christians. Students from the Mennonite Brethren Bible College serve with music and also with preaching the gospel.

On Tuesday evening we have prayer and Bible study. At first only the workers of the Logan Mission took part, but by and by those who had been saved by the blood of the Lamb came and witnessed what the Lord had done for them. There the workers have an opportunity to lead those who are young in faith to green pastures.

The Saturday afternoon "Hobby Club" is led by Brother Frank Peters and is a great blessing. With the help of Child Evangelism and Sunday School teachers from the College, about two hundred children from different areas of the city have the opportunity to hear the gospel every week.

Visitation in the various institutions I have mentioned is likewise continued with the help of voluntary workers, and God is blessing the work.

New Branches in the Mission

Nearly two years ago the sisters Else Falk and Margaret Voth started a girls club on Monday evenings. This club is attended by about eighteen girls. The girls do crafts, and the activities close with an "object" or "flannel graph" lesson. Several of the girls have been saved and praise the Lord for the forgiveness of sins. In connection with this evening, the leaders organized a "Mothers and Daughters Banquet." I have had the privilege of participating in this event, and it was a joy to be there among them. Several mothers expressed their appreciation for the work of these sisters.

The work of the Union Gospel Mission has expanded, with two new branches being added in the past year that are worthy of mention. The regular Wednesday services from eight o'clock to nine o'clock are led by the three Winnipeg congregations. Small groups serve with songs and music and the ladies serve coffee and homemade baking. Those who attend include the unemployed, homeless, drunkards and the like.

After these have been dismissed, little tables and chairs are set up. Shortly before ten o'clock, fifteen to twenty experienced personal workers, mostly from the College, arrive. After a short prayer meeting, the night mission begins. A male quartet sings over a loudspeaker. Four

men are standing outside, inviting people in and handing out tracts. Many who are aimlessly wandering the street are attracted by the singing and the friendly invitation. Inside the individual is warmly greeted and a personal worker talks to him about the love of God. A cup of hot coffee and something to eat is placed before him. Soon he is engrossed in deep conversation, often forgetting his coffee. There are many questions to answer, problems to solve. Some of these poor people return, recognize the lost condition of their soul and are saved. The personal workers would often want to close by twelve o'clock, but they are not always able to do so because many conversations go on long after midnight.

A third Sunday school was begun in the Union Gospel Mission. Although the beginning was difficult, from twenty to thirty children are attending now. Five students from the College are serving as teachers. Brother John Toews (a student) leads this work. God has already richly blessed this work.

The young people meet every Friday evening. In point of fact, they are still children but we want to reach them early so that they will learn something better than what they can learn on the street. A small choir has been organized, and at the close of the practise some brief instruction on Christian living is given. Later, the women gather to work on blankets and clothes. Some of the women are not saved. Sister Else Falk and Sister Ed Unruh are concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of the women, and their work is not in vain.

Some Illustrative Cases from the Work of the Logan Mission

The mother and children of a particular family occasionally attended our meetings and were thus familiar with the message of the Cross. One day the older daughter returned home from far away. But before she had had a chance to attend our worship service, she was in rough company one evening. And what happened? A young man in a drunken condition tried to shoot her brother. She intervened, trying to protect him, and was shot. How horrible! Brother Schmidt was asked to speak at her funeral. Thus we see an instance of fruit of the work of the Mission, for the people called an evangelical preacher in their time of

Brother and Sister John M. Schmidt and family, 1952

Mothers, daughters, workers of the Logan Avenue Mission (l-r): Brother and Sister Schmidt; Else Falk, director of the Mary-Martha Home

need. Here was an opportunity to preach not only the terrible end of a sinner but also the eternal love of the Savior.

Sister Margaret Voth, head nurse in Brother Falk's Nursing Home on Hargrave Street, still finds time to help deeply fallen women and girls and tell them of Jesus's love for sinners. Upon my request she tells the following story:

Late one evening in July, 1953, we were sitting on the veranda and were suddenly surprised by a thunderstorm. We were concerned when we saw a drunken woman stumbling along the street in such weather after having been shouted at by a man. We accompanied her to the rooming house where she lived. Every day for a week we prayed for her and visited her. She was quite overcome by the fact that anyone should be interested in her. Because of her drinking, she had become separated from her husband and children and now was completely broken. She was so deeply fallen that she was known to the police, whereas she could have been living amid good circumstances.

On the following Sunday she came along willingly to the meeting in the Gospel Light Mission on Logan Avenue. We saw that the message of Jesus's love for sinners spoke to her. After the service we took her home to lunch. She was eager to learn how she might gain the peace and joy she saw in her new friends. She pleaded to be shown the way to the Savior of sinners. Amid trembling and great joy, we were able to show her the way to the Lord Jesus. In her poor little room we knelt in prayer, wrestling for the salvation of her soul. She was broken, confessed her sins to the Lord and, after a long struggle, she looked at us with joy, saying that she believed and that the Savior had saved her. She based her faith on Isaiah 53 and John 1:12.

For a while she was happy and had victory over her drinking, but then the terrible battle began again. How often we visited her and prayed with her! She was only forty-nine years old, but she had been drinking the longest part of her life. Sometimes we wept with her and over her, but the Lord kept her in his faith. She began to read good books instead of junk literature. Six months later she became sick, and the doctors diagnosed cancer. She suffered for a year-and-a-half. During that time she stayed a while in the Mary-Martha Home as well as in our home (Sister Margaret Voth's home), where she came under Christian influence.

Through her suffering, the Lord drew her closer to himself. When we visited her at her deathbed, she almost always asked us to read the Bible and to pray. How heartfelt were her thanks to the Lord for his saving grace and his forgiveness of sins. Sometimes she said, "Oh, why did you not find me years ago?" Her Catholic upbringing had not been able to help her.

In the end, when her poor suffering body was only skin and bones and her face distorted by pain, we marvelled at the deep peace in her shining eyes. Her

whole being was completely changed. Before she died, her husband and children visited her. Yes, the Lord has the power to save, even today, those who come to him in faith. And we are grateful for the privilege of leading lost sinners to Him.

Did you stoop to pick up the flowers
That lay wilted in the dust,
Plaiting them into a wreath for Jesus,
Robbing hellfire of its thrust?

The Congregations Share the Work of the Mission

Under the direction of the city missionary, four groups of Christian people from the Winnipeg churches were organized to conduct street meetings during the summer months. They presented the message of the Cross in songs and music, witnessing and sermons, to the passersby who stopped to listen. Some stopped out of curiosity, listened with indifference or even ridicule and passed on, while some stayed and joined heartily in the singing.

To make others happy is the responsibility of every Christian, be it in the family, the church, at work or in his community. No time of the year is better suited to this than Christmas. Here in the big city, our congregations have a special opportunity to help the poorest among the poor. The city missionary gives addresses to the congregations, and they busily collect clothing, toys, nuts, candy in order to make parcels for needy families. Shortly before Christmas, volunteer drivers pick up the parcels and, together with several singers, drive to needy, often totally neglected homes. One hardly wants to call them homes, but people live in such homes, and the love of Christ compels Christians to find them. When a family is given a gift, the people are more inclined to listen to the story of Bethlehem and the songs of the singers. Through this act of love, many become willing to come to the Mission.

With the help of the Bible College, the three city congregations, the Niverville Congregation, the ladies group from Elm Creek and the sisters of the Mary-Martha Home, the Brethren Falk and Schmidt were able to reach out to young and old, to practise love, to comfort and proclaim peace. What is more wonderful, more precious and more

rewarding? In Isaiah 52:7 we read, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

In Memoriam

A word of love and appreciation is hereby dedicated to those precious ones who have already gone to be with the Lord. They served the Lord through the years with love and loyalty, time and sacrifice, in unselfish discipleship. We remember Brother Johann Warkentin of Winkler, who laid the foundation, who visited brethren and sisters in spite of bumpy, ungraded roads and thus called the Mission into being. Brother G.G. Doerksen of Borden, Saskatchewan, was treasurer for a number of years. How much effort he put into this work in the beginning years, in order to meet the needs of the City Mission Committees! Brother J.A. Kroeker, chairman of the City Mission committee, always had a warm concern for the work and always had a cheerful willingness to help. The same is true of Brother H.S. Voth, for many years chairman of the Canadian Conference. He was a friend of the Mission. We have a deep gratitude to our dear brother, F.F. Isaak. He was chairman of the Home Committee and secretary of the City Mission Committee. Although his daily work kept him very busy, and he was also involved in the work of his congregation, he always found time for the Mary-Martha Home. We talked much about the necessity, the practical value, and the responsibilities of the Home, and always we brought the matter before the Lord in prayer. He said many words of wisdom to me, and also words that made me pause and think, such as, "Anna, let God do more."

And now also we owe a word to our dear sisters. Sister Lena Rempel Braun of Winkler, stepped in for me while I was attending Bible School in California. She worked for a modest wage. May God reward her. We are also thankful for the first Sister H.S. Rempel. We had only a short time of fellowship with her. Sister C.N. Hiebert was a preacher's wife in the true sense of God's Word—hardworking, godly, cheerful, always ready to help, hospitable without complaining. She supported her husband and did not hinder his work as a travelling missionary. Instead, her prayers always accompanied him. To her children she was a loving mother, and she was a blessing to her congregation in her quiet, God-fearing way.

I also include my loving, good and faithful parents, for they prayed much for the Mission and for me. Yes, "The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7).

I would like to dedicate the following poem, written by Brother Jacob Kroeker of Wernigerode, to the memory of those who have gone to be with the Lord.

To Those who Have Run Their Course
So many a harp has been silenced
That once chimed in praise of the Lord.
In many the last string was broken,
Singing songs of the Lamb with each chord.
The lips that gave witness to the greatness of God,
In their goals are now silent.
The knees bent in prayer are now resting
From the burden that lay on their souls.
Their service, their suffering, is finished.
Their eternal Sabbath has dawned
Their faith, which they bravely defended,
Has attained its inheritance bond.
They see Him they served as their life's spring,
Who nurtured their strength and their joy;
In glory they sing at the heavenly throne
The new song of the Lamb evermore.

But we still must serve in our pilgrim's garb,
Still clothed in our earthly cowl.
Our faith has not finished its battle,
Joys and sorrows - still part of our role.
But Zion is also our common goal,
Which they have achieved and for which we still strive.
But, oh, how soon we cannot know,
When in glorious victory we too shall arrive.

Closing

The North End of Winnipeg, where sixty years ago there was still open prairie, was the place of the mustard-seed-like beginning of the work of the City Mission. Today, after more than four decades, the tiny mustard seed has grown into a mighty tree whose branches cover the North, South, East and West of our city. Hundreds have found shelter beneath its branches and have come to the haven of rest. These branches, via radio, also spread far and wide over cities, towns and country, into the homes of the lonely, to all people whoever and wherever they are in all circumstances. "And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region" (Acts 13:49).

Although much work has been done, and today the Mission is stronger than ever, much room remains for expansion. We do not want to stand idle in the marketplace, but continue in the work "while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Before I close my report, I would like to thank all my friends in Canada from the bottom of my heart for all the support that we received at the Mary-Martha Home during the difficult years at the beginning. As well, my thanks are extended to both the Canadian and Manitoba Conference, who made it possible for us to have a Mary-Martha Home and supported us with all their strength. May the Lord richly reward you with his grace.

Poem:

Lord Jesus Christ, the Work is Thine

(a paraphrase)

Lord Jesus Christ, the work is thine
That thou to us committed.
We consecrate it all to thee,
With all its joys and burdens.

O, bless this work and our endeavor,
And keep us faithful in it.
Let us be bold in steadfast faith
And joyful in our prayer.

Grant hope and courage from above
To go forever forward.
And let us lean more on thy strength
And not upon our own.

And when we are discouraged
And lose the glow of joy,
This cup may still be taken
From the wise hand of God.

So let us not look right or left
But strive toward the goal;
Continue with much silent prayer,
God's blessing will not fail!

(H.F.H.)